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HARRY CALVERLEY.



HARRY CALVERI

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL HYDE."



IN THREE VOLUMES.

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HARRY CALVERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Good looks, good manners, good spirits, and a good temper, powerfully seconded by the prospect of a baronetcy with fifteen thousand a-year, and the actual command of a troop in the —th Lancers, had made Harry Calverley, at six-and-twenty, one of the most popular individuals in the lounging, dining, dancing, and flirting world of London. Chaperons hailed him as an *eligible;* young ladies blushed their approval of him, as a *cavalier;* elderly gentlemen esteemed him as a man of sense, and a good listener (often

convertible terms); young dandies voted him a capital dresser, and a first-rate judge of horseflesh; while all agreed in pronouncing him a most unaffected and unexceptionable specimen of the genus *homo*, and the species *lancer*.

In what proportion the personal qualities of our hero combined with the circumstances of his social position, to produce these golden opinions, it would be difficult to ascertain; suffice it to say, that the world was tolerably accurate in its estimate of the former, while

quence, that Harry Calverley was highly deserving of patronage, and well worthy the attention of the "*curious in sous-is-dew*."—Q.E.D.

But, alas! one short month sufficed to shame the logic of the world, and whisk round the barometer of poor Harry's prospects from "set fair" to "stormy." Mr. Calverley, *père*, who was an enthusiastic disciple of Ude, died one morning in his vocation, after a gallant, but too ardent, assault on a *pâté de foie gras*. A sinecure of four thousand a-year in the Court of Chancery, conferred upon him in early life by a Lord Chancellor uncle, passed away from his family, at his death. Such had been his extravagance, that, on an examination of his affairs, his debts proved sufficiently extensive to swallow up the whole of the sum for which he had insured his life, on obtaining his appointment; and all that remained for the maintenance of his family,

was an estate of about eight hundred a-year, inherited from his mother, and strictly entailed on his son.

Misfortunes never come alone; and the same number of the Morning Post which announced the death of Henry Grey Calverley, Esq., M.P., at his house in Bruton Street, ushered in the birth of a son and heir to Sir Hugh Calverley, Bart., of Calverley Hall, in the county of ———-; the said son and heir making his appearance, somewhat unaccountably, in the fifteenth year of the marriage of the said Sir Hugh with the Lady Mary Welbore O'Reilly!

The above-mentioned simultaneous occurrences, so fatal to the prospects of poor Harry, operated on his actual position like the chimes of midnight on the toilette and equipage of Cinderella. Off rolled the cabriolet to Burnand's; off walked the horses to Tattersall's; groom and valet were dismissed; the chambers in Albany vacated; and, not

the least mortifying consequence of this system of retrenchment, the Gazette put forth to the world the following announcement:—

"—th Regt. of Light Dr. Capt. Simon de Montfort Perkins, from h.p. 101st foot, to be Captain *vice* Calverley, who exchanges, *rec. diff.*"

To one not particularly conversant with the theory of optics, it is quite unaccountable what an effect the fluctuation of a man's financial credit produces on the visual organs of his friends. It would seem that the possession of a certain number of acres, or a certain amount of bank stock, generally rarifies the air in the neighbourhood of the proprietor, so as to exhibit his outline and features in clear and strong relief; while, on the other hand, the absence of these, or counterbalancing advantages, in an individual, seldom fails to create a density of atmosphere around him, nearly impervious to the delicate eyesight of the fashionable world.

Of this singular phenomenon our hero's re-appearance in town, after the events which had so effectually clouded his worldly prospects, afforded more than one illustration. It was surprising how many prudent mammas and establishment-hunting daughters, as they drove down Regent Street, or cantered through the parks, were suddenly seized, on his approach, with every symptom of confirmed ophthalmia; while sundry of his male acquaintances, whose footing in society was so precarious as to be only maintained by clinging to those who were more firmly established than themselves, seemed to be affected by a sort of intermitting short-sightedness, the attacks of which were generally most severe in the vicinity of White's and Crockford's.

But Harry had lived too long in the world to be much discomposed by such palpable evidences of the change in his position. He was something of a philosopher, and bore

the circumstances, it was not to be expected that Harry should be much impressed by the one, and, to his credit be it spoken, he was as little influenced by the other. Whatever might be the deficiencies of moral training in his education, our hero had grown up an honest-hearted and right-minded fellow; and having passed through the fiery furnace of a public school into the lions' den of a regiment of Lancers, without being much singed or scratched in the process, he might be safely reported as *seasoned*, and, unlike Mr. Mathews's nervous gentleman, quite "fit to be trusted alone."

In addition to Harry, the family of Mr. Calverley consisted, at the time of his death, of his wife, two daughters, lately "come out," and a younger son, who had been, for the eighteen months previous, attached to the British Embassy at Paris—*menant bonne et joyeuse vie*,—and, on an average, exceed-

uncomfortable virtue, of which they had not the slightest conception, even in theory— economy!

On the part of our hero, there was nothing left undone which could soften the reverse, or alleviate the privations of his mother and sisters. The appropriation of four-fifths of his income was barely sufficient for their support, even on the reduced scale of expenditure which circumstances had rendered necessary; but though duty and affection alike commanded the sacrifice of his personal views and prospects, he certainly deserved some credit for the cheerfulness with which that sacrifice was made, and for the absolute disregard of his own interests which he exhibited in every proceeding connected with these family arrangements.

Having seen the ladies comfortably established in their new domicile, and despatched his brother Spencer back to his duties at Paris, with a suitable admonition on the

CHAPTER II.

From what has been stated concerning our hero's personal popularity, and the station formerly occupied by his family in London society, it might be supposed that he was at no loss for powerful friends to recommend his claims in official quarters. But in point of fact, his immediate connexions were few, and of those few, the most influential were little disposed to exert themselves in his favour.

His uncle, Sir Hugh, had been for many years at variance with the junior branch

would be to cut her altogether; and sedulously watched her opportunity to carry this purpose into effect.

The resolution once formed, the pretext was not likely to be long wanting; and Mrs. Calverley's own folly and presumption ably seconded the wishes of her noble relative in that particular. It was reported to Lady Mary, by a discreet friend of both parties, that Mrs. Calverley had been overheard to say, in answer to an enquiry from some common acquaintance, whether she proposed to attend Lady Mary's select *conversazione* on such an evening,—"Why, yes; I suppose I must,—though it is a great bore,—one is sure to meet that horrid brother of her's, Lord Enniscorthy, and all sorts of Irish quizzes."

This was decisive; the insult to her house and her country was not to be overlooked; more especially as it proceeded from a person who was, in the expressive jargon of the

fashionable world, *nobody*,—being, in fact, if we are rightly informed, the only daughter of the late Captain Jeremiah Simcox, of the Bombay Engineers, sometime the Honourable East India Company's Resident at Brandicherry, and subsequently Master-general of the Ordnance to his Highness the Rajah of Mortarabad;—and as Lady Mary's influence with Sir Hugh was of that description which young wives generally exercise over elderly husbands, she had no difficulty in persuading him to espouse her quarrel, even to the extent of a decided estrangement from his only brother, who, as her ladyship benevolently observed, "was only a half-brother, after all."

The result of this important family feud to poor Harry, was the total deprivation of his uncle's support and countenance, at a time when they might have been materially beneficial, as Sir Hugh was an M. P. of considerable weight, a staunch supporter of the

existing ministry, and connected, through his wife, with one of the principal members of the cabinet. As it was, he was probably the last person in the British dominions to whom his nephew would have thought of addressing himself on the present occasion.

Somebody, however, must be applied to; but the selection was no very easy matter to one who felt all that sensitive and haughty repugnance to asking favours, which is one of the most inconvenient characteristics of an independent spirit. Many were the courteous peers and pompous officials who suggested themselves in turn, and were in turn rejected:—"Lord So-and-so has a good deal of influence; but I am scarcely intimate enough with him, to solicit its exertion in my favour;—Sir John is a good-natured fellow, and would be glad to serve me, I dare say; but then he has two sons and a nephew in the army, and I can hardly have the face to interfere with so many family claims;—a word

from Mr. — would do my business; but, confound his supercilious manner! he looks as if he expected every body to crawl before him;" — in short, although *l'embarras du choix*, was very far from being *l'embarras des richesses*, the effect was not very dissimilar, and the close of his deliberations found him generally at the point from whence he had started.

While in this state of doubt and perplexity, he was one morning sauntering down Regent street, on his way to the Junior United Service Club,—*nescio quid meditans nugarum, et totus in illis*,—when he was fortunate enough to encounter an individual, of whose will and power to serve him, he had already received convincing proof; this was the colonel of the regiment of Lancers which he had so recently quitted.

Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir Cornelius O'Sullivan, G.C.B., G.C.H., K.C., K.M.T., K.T.S., and the Lord knows what besides,

was, as might be conjectured, a military hero of no inconsiderable magnitude; for, as we judge of the ferocity of a comet by the length of its tail, so we may usually estimate the warlike distinction of a general officer, in proportion to the array of chivalrous initials which follow in the train of his patronymic: and certainly, there were few cases in which the accuracy of that criterion might be more safely relied upon, than in the instance of which we are treating. From the siege of Gibraltar down to the battle of Waterloo inclusively, Sir Cornelius had come in for the very best of what was going on in the fighting way. He could boast of having fought and bled in every quarter of the globe; and throughout his active and brilliant career, he had distinguished himself nearly as much by his wisdom in council, as by his valour in the field. Although he was a rigid disciplinarian, the kindness of his heart, the frankness of his manners, and the impartiality of his

conduct, had always endeared him to the troops under his command, as much as the strict performance of his military duties, and his zeal for the service, recommended him to his superiors in authority.

Despite the progress of time, the ravages of more than one unhealthy climate, and the effects of sundry gun-shot and sabre wounds, of which he had received his full share,—being in fact slashed and scarred in every direction,—Sir Cornelius presented at sixty-four, as fine a specimen of a portly old campaigner as the records of the Army List could furnish forth; and as he strode along, with his ruddy good-humoured countenance, ample chest, and erect military carriage, our hero experienced a melancholy feeling of retrospective pride, in acknowledging the "present divinity" of the —th Lancers.

"What, Calverley!" said the veteran, shaking him heartily by the hand, "how are you, my good fellow? So;—I am sorry to find you

have left the regiment. How comes that? Not tired of the service, I hope?"

"Far from it, general," said Harry; "but the fact is, I have left the —th, for the best of all possible reasons—because I could not afford to remain in it. My poor father's death"——

"Oh, ay!" interrupted Sir Cornelius, "very true; I was sincerely grieved to hear it—a great pity, 'pon my honour! I am afraid there are not a few in the regiment who might be better spared. It always gave me much pleasure to hear so good a report of you from your commanding officer."

"I am happy to think," said Calverley, "that I have acquitted myself to his lordship's satisfaction."

"To be sure—to be sure! But what do you mean to do with yourself? you don't give up the army altogether?"

"No!" answered Harry; "I have gone on half-pay for the present; but my object

would be to get upon the staff, if possible."

"Ay, ay! the best thing for you, too. But what prospect have you of effecting it? How do you stand at the Horse Guards?"

Harry gave an expressive shrug.

"Well, well," continued the general, "we must see what can be done. You know I'm not in power—out of parliament, even! But do you come and breakfast with me to-morrow, at all events. I am at Ibbotson's; only in town for two or three days, on my way to Strathfieldsaye. Mind, half-past nine, precisely."

So saying, Sir Cornelius strode off, and Harry continued his progress to the club, very well satisfied with the result of the *rencontre*, and not at all likely to forget his engagement to breakfast on the morrow.

"Punctuality," said Louis the Eighteenth, "is the politeness of kings;" by which profound remark His Most Christian Majesty meant, I conclude, to imply, that it is the

duty of subjects; and, indeed, towards a superior, if not among equals, it must be allowed to be an observance of more imperative obligation than any which pertain to the mere courtesies of social intercourse. Of the importance of this virtue, there are no class of persons more thoroughly aware than military men; and, accordingly, it will readily be believed that Calverley turned the corner of Vere Street precisely as the post clock marked the hour of twenty-five minutes past nine, on the following morning.

He found the general, not negligently arrayed in morning-gown and slippers, after the fashion of most elderly, and not a few young, gentlemen of the day, with whom the period of breakfast is a sort of intermediate state of existence—the very twilight of the toilet,—but clothed in all his meridian splendour; booted, spurred, black-neck-clothed, and frock-coated, with a degree of spruceness and *tenue* that would have defied

the military criticism of Frederick William himself.

"Punctual to the moment!" said he, as he drew out and examined a gold repeater of the most Brobdignagian dimensions, decorated with what appeared like a young jack-chain, having a couple of or-molu candlesticks pendant therefrom. "Dermot, bring the coffee," added he, addressing the servant.

"I *shall*, Sir Cornelius," answered the valet, with that confusion of tense, if not of *sense*, which at once denoted his country. But an Irishman is always regardless of the *future*.

"I am glad to see, Calverley," continued the general, "that you retain your military exactness in keeping an appointment. Depend upon it, my dear fellow, there is nothing like it for getting on in this world; but come, sit down, and let us have some breakfast. You have no objection to a beef-steak, I hope?"

"None in the world, general," answered Harry, who, from a proper feeling of subordination, determined to be as complaisant to the *jentacular* predilections of his military superior, as the barber's brother was to the visionary hospitalities of the Barmecide.

"That's right, my good fellow!" said Sir Cornelius. "Breakfast is, according to my judgment, a very important ceremony, destined to prepare one for the toils, and brace one up against the annoyances of the coming day; and there's no use in life in slurring it over in a pick-tooth style; I am for laying a tolerably substantial foundation at starting; you are then independent of what may happen —*paratus in omnem exitum fortunæ*;" which last word he pronounced *forchunay*, following up the whole by that peculiar self-satisfied chuckle in which elderly gentlemen are apt to indulge after having been delivered of a classical quotation.

"I quite agree in your philosophy, Sir

Cornelius," answered Calverley; "and you see I am giving practical evidence of my sincerity in the cause. May I trouble you for the potatoes? In their jackets, I perceive, as my friend, Lady ——, assured me they should always appear at table."

"Why, then, sir, Lady —— was right, perfectly right! and it's no more than I would have expected from so good an Irishwoman; for, in spite of her liberalism, and her love for those rebellious coxcombs, the French, she *is* a good Irishwoman, and an honour to her country; ay, and one of the most talented women in Europe, entirely! That I will say; though we do quarrel like cat and dog whenever we meet. But we are very good friends, notwithstanding."

"*Amantium iræ*, general, I suppose," observed Calverley.

"Ha! ha! ha! well said, Captain Calverley! But come, I want to talk to you a little upon business. Can you tell me who this

Cornelia," answered Calverley; "and you see I am giving practical evidence of my sincerity in the cause. May I trouble you for the potatoes? In their jackets, I perceive, as my friend, Lady ——, assured me they should always appear at table."

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"Well, but I [illegible] Calver-
[illegible] you a little
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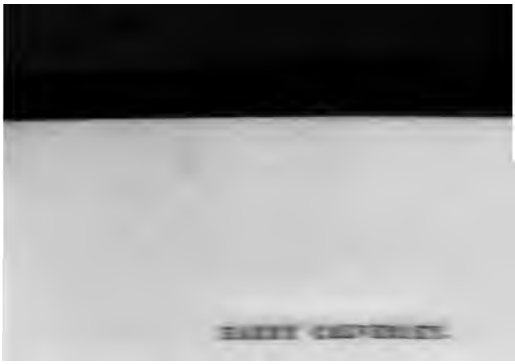
Captain de Montfort Perkins, who has got your troop in the regiment, is?"

"All I know concerning him, general, is, that he was formerly in the —th Hussars."

"So much the better—so much the better! There will be some chance that he may know his business, and that he can sit a horse, at any rate. I was afraid he might be a regular infantry-man, who would take twice the drilling of a recruit from the plough; and that plays the deuce with a troop, more especially when the regiment hasn't much character to spare in that way, which I regret to say is the case with the —th."

"Indeed, general?" said Harry. "I am sorry we do not stand higher in your estimation."

"Why the fact is, my dear boy!—between ourselves—I may say so to you *now*, as you are no longer under his command—Lord Wrottesley is an excellent fellow, and means very well; but he has about as much notion



of commanding a regiment of cavalry, as fellow Cæsar had of a Congreve rocket. But it's always the way, when one of your family-boobies is placed at the head of a regiment, instead of a genuine thorough-going officer, who has seen service and knows what he is about. That is not the way matters should be managed if I had any influence. Why, sir, it was but the other day that my own nephew, Lord Ballyfin,—the head of my family, too,—wrote to me to request that I would use my interest at the Horse Guards to get him appointed to the command of the —th, vacant by the retirement of poor old Wilbraham. Well, sir, what do you think was my answer? "Dear Ballyfin,—the senior officer of the —th, Major Walbrook, is in his fifty-sixth year;—he has been shot at in every quarter of the globe, and has lost an arm in the service of his king and country.—If such a man is to be superseded by a boy of six-and-twenty, who has never smelt powder but at a review in Hyde

Park, all I can say is, that it shall not be through my means.—Your affectionate uncle, Cornelius O'Sullivan.'"

Of course, Calverley, as in duty bound, expressed the requisite degree of admiration for this instance of conscientious forbearance, and the general proceeded:

"Do you recollect the day when I inspected the regiment in the Phœnix?"

"Last June twelvemonth?—Perfectly well, general! We had the honour of dining with you afterwards at Morrison's."

"Exactly so," said Sir Cornelius. Well, sir, there were some of the evolutions that day that would have disgraced the City Light Horse. I never was in such a passion in my life; and the devil of it was, that I could scarcely speak my mind to you, as I had asked you all to dinner. I took care, however, to let Wrottesley know my opinion of the matter the next day. But, sir, bad as the affair certainly was altogether, I must acknowledge

that there was *one* troop which nearly redeemed the character of the regiment by the precision and accuracy with which they got through their business, and which left me in no doubt as to the fact of their having a good officer at their head. That troop was *yours*, Captain Calverley!"

Harry looked as modest as became the occasion; and if he did not blush, it was because he had been for some years out of practice.

"Yes!" continued Sir Cornelius, "from that time I have had you down in my tablets, Calverley; and as every thing I have heard of you from Lord Wrottesley has tended to strengthen my favourable opinion of your claims as an officer and a gentleman, I do assure you that it would afford me great satisfaction were I to be instrumental in forwarding your views. But I regret to say, that I am not quite the man I was, in point of influence. This cursed reform question, you see, has put

me completely on the shelf. I am not fond of experimental philosophy in politics, sir! and I never was the man to turn my back upon my friends for my own dirty purposes, or paltry views of aggrandizement. No, sir! I am proud to say, I stood by my old commander; and would do so again to-morrow! But my constituents in the county ——— were not of my way of thinking; and so at the last election they thought proper to send me to the right about, and to elect a *spalpeen* of an attorney—one M'Dowd—whose uncle was my father's whipper-in, sir! A fellow without a foot of land in the county, and who, I fancy, was indebted to my *liberal* colleague for a qualification. But so it is—they elected him, and I wish them joy of him, by the Lord!"

So saying, Sir Cornelius took a copious pinch of snuff, an operation which appeared to exercise a sedative influence on his irritated feelings; for he continued, in his usual tone of good humour:—

"Well, my dear fellow! to come to the point. As I was saying, I regret for your sake, that my interest is on the decline. But such as it is, you may rely on its exertion in your favour. As I told you, I am anxious to befriend you on your own account: and in addition to that, I had a respect for your father, who was, as you know, an old acquaintance of mine, and a staunch Tory to boot. So, my dear boy, here is a letter I have written to the commander-in-chief, in which I have said all I could for you. To-day is levee day at the Horse Guards.—You will deliver it in person, of course—And so, God prosper you!"

Calverley here attempted to express his thanks.

"Tut, tut, my dear fellow!" said the general: "Don't mention it! I should be right glad if it were in my power to do more; and I only hope it may serve you at head quarters;—but no professions of gratitude, if you please,

until you know whether my interference has been of any use. And in the mean time, oblige me by just casting your eyes over the newspaper, and tell me if there is anything new from the theatre of war, or whether old Chassé still maintains his ground.—For to say the truth, my eyes begin to warn me that I am not quite so young as I was forty years ago, or else the art of printing is sadly deteriorated."

CHAPTER III.

"So you are positively going to stew in the land of pagodas! To roast in the region of rice and rupees!" exclaimed Fitzroy Lumley to our hero, as they met in St. James's Street, about three weeks after the conversation which we have just related.

"Even so, Fitz,—to grill amongst ghauts, perspire amongst punkahs, and swelter amid sepoys,—to carry on your alliterative description. But allow me to ask, how you obtained possession of so valuable a piece of intelligence?"

"I dined yesterday, for my sins," said Lumley, "with your new commander, the illustrious Jellico; and he is so full of his recent appointment, that he can talk of nothing else. He gave me an analytical detail of the whole concern, with a particular enumeration of his suite and establishment: and you may imagine he was not very likely to omit so important a functionary as an aide-de-camp."

"Well, then," said Calverley, "as you are acquainted with him, you will perhaps oblige me by familiarizing me a little with the *carte du pays*, for I know nothing of him myself, beyond the fact of his being governor of Madras; and indeed I was only formally introduced to him three days since, as I owe my appointment entirely to the kindness of my old colonel, O'Sullivan, who seems rather potential with the people at the Horse Guards."

"Well, you are certainly thankful for small favours, if your feelings of gratitude are very warmly excited by the prospect of a five years'

transportation. I look upon a man going to serve in India, as a sort of honorary convict, and would as soon think of congratulating him, as if he were about to visit Sydney for the benefit of his morals. But come, if you hope to extract any information from me, you must turn about, and walk down the street with me: you know I must not go out of bounds while in harness;—and a pleasant, airy costume it is for the dog-days, to be sure! One would think we were a set of salamanders! Zamiel himself would scarcely like to be on guard such a day as this!"

"Well," said Calverley, "but what do you know about Sir Sampson Jellico?"

"Softly, my good fellow! You require from me a great effort of memory, and no small physical exertion in the way of talking, this hot weather. So I must take my own time, and collect my ideas at my leisure. You have seen the hero in question, I believe?"

"Yes, as I told you just now," said Harry.

"Very good,—then you need not be informed that he has a face like the sun in a fog; and that it does not require Sir John Herschel's telescope to ascertain the fact that the disk of the luminary is adorned with certain mountainous excrescences of a volcanic character. Indeed his whole visage may be not unaptly compared to Vesuvius or Stromboli, considering the frequency of fiery eruptions thereon. You are also aware that he progresses *haud passibus æquis;* seeing that his sinister supporter is of oak:—but as he will not fail, on the first convenient opportunity, to favour you with an elaborate detail of the circumstances under which he parted company with its predecessor,—even to the scientific description of the *tourniquet*,—I shall not destroy, by any anticipatory particulars, the gratification which you will derive from his taste for *minutiæ* in such matters; so no more on the subject of the outward man. As to his position, he is, as you probably know,

are properly submissive: rather addicted to long stories, the truth of which as one cannot controvert, it is best to take for granted: and somewhat partial to arrack punch, which, if you happen to have the intestinal invulnerability of a Chabert, you may keep him in countenance by drinking. *Dixi.*"

"Has he any family?" enquired our hero.

"Yes, he has a daughter and a wife."

"So much the better.—But why reverse the order of things in their enumeration?"

"Why, I have mentioned them, I believe," said Lumley, "with a strict regard to the order of chronology. *Mademoiselle* has always been his daughter, but there is some little difficulty as to the epoch when 'mamma' became his wife. Certain it is, that the early history of my Lady Jellico is enveloped in obscurity nearly as impenetrable as that which enshrouds the birth-place of Homer. Some say that to her skill in ministering to the pleasures of the table, she is indebted for the pri-

vilege of sitting at its head; others assert that she fell to the lot of the general, as his share of the booty at the storming of Seringapatam. It is not my business, however, *tantas componere lites;* all that you are interested in knowing is, that she weighs about twenty stone,—speaks a jargon unauthorized alike by 'gods, men, and columns',—outshines in her apparel the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,—and might very appropriately figure on a signboard over the door of Crockford's, as a palpable personification of *rouge et noir.*"

"Alas! for my sins!" exclaimed Calverley: "my last hope is in the daughter, and a forlorn hope it is; for what can be expected from such a stock? Pray put me out of pain: what sort of a person is she?"

"She is a most appropriate relative to such antecedents: or to change my metaphor,—if you think proper to consider the *three* as a sort of family *syllogism*, I may say that she is a most logical deduction from the premises."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Calverley, "I have got into agreeable quarters, it seems! I had my misgivings on the subject from the aspect of Sir Sampson, but I had no idea that I had fallen so decidedly among the Philistines. It is, however, most unaccountable to me that my excellent friend, Fitzroy Lumley, than whom His Majesty's three regiments of Foot-Guards do not contain a more fastidious critic, or a finer gentleman, should have ever found himself in familiar communication with such intolerable people as these seem to be!"

"My dear Calverley," said the guardsman, "may I request not to be misrepresented? Fastidious I may be, and so I believe is every man not born with the hide of a rhinoceros, and organs to match; but *fine* I am *not*,—never have been—and never will be. Moreover, if any thing could suffice to ruffle my philosophical equanimity, it would be the accusation of *finery*. As to my acquaintance

to heaven Al * * * y, or somebody else, would introduce the fashion here. It would be such a convenience to move about *quasi* imperceptibly, without the exertion of walking, the fatigue of riding, or the bore of driving."

For my part," said Calverley, "I am not so completely out of conceit with the means of locomotion with which nature has thought proper to furnish me. To be carried on men's shoulders must, I should think, remind one a little too much of the coffin. Perhaps, however, with your misanthropic turn of mind, such associations would not be disagreeable."

"Again, my dear fellow, you mistake me most egregiously, in accusing me of misanthropy. There lives no man more completely at peace with the whole of mankind; and if I do keep out of their way sometimes, it is not as a *misanthrope*, but as a *fainéant*. When I am too lazy to dance, I stay away from balls,—when I feel too sluggish to move, I pass the day on my sofa,—and when too in-

mistake not, by throwing hot water in their faces. Now I submit that the parallel would have better suited A——, L——, or D—— than myself; for in the first place, I seldom give dinners, and those I do give are but indifferent performances in that line; in the second place I am *not cleaned out*, and never mean to be so; and, lastly, were *I* afflicted like Timon, with such a scurvy set of intimate friends, I should certainly have thrown *cold* water on every attempt at a renewal of intercourse."

"A defence that would do credit to Charles Phillips!" exclaimed our hero, "as far as the first count of the indictment; but what do you say to Diogenes?"

"All I shall say concerning him is, that if he had ever mounted guard at St. James's in the month of July, he would have had quite enough of the sun, and would never have found fault with Alexander, for intercepting its rays in their descent upon his

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT an insufferable crowd!" exclaimed Lumley, as they ascended the stairs of the Gallery; "we shall be sure to meet some women we know, and they will expect us to do the *dilettanti;* but I shall leave all that to you, as I find it impossible to affect enthusiasm.—There—I told you so—one of those chattering Caryl girls,—just beyond the archway in the next room: I have half a mind to make my escape. She will talk us to death."

"Psha! nonsense," exclaimed Calverley, pushing forward with a degree of eagerness

vidual. A well-modulated laugh is the never-failing concomitant of refinement and good breeding; while a loud, harsh and inharmonious cachinnation, may be generally taken as strong presumptive evidence of coarse habits, an unfeeling disposition, and an uncultivated mind. In saying this, however, it is not our wish to pass sentence of condemnation on the full indulgence of the risible faculties. Far from it: a hearty laugh is one of the pleasantest emotions to which we are liable, and when its impulse is obeyed with a due regard to time and place, and its tones are regulated according to the gamut of civilization, it is nearly as exhilarating to witness it in others, as to experience it ourselves. Indeed, as we candidly acknowledge that this species of hysterical explosion is one of the chief results which our labours are directed to produce in the person of the indulgent reader, we should argue with a very ill grace against an offence to which we are particularly anxious to supply

and teeth of the most pearl-like brilliancy, she was nothing loth to exhibit their combined fascinations by the indulgence of a gaiety which tended to refute one of the most received maxims of philosophy,—for it sometimes seemed an *effect* without a *cause!*

The lady by whom she was accompanied, and whom, in spite of her youth, (for she was evidently not Miss Caryl's senior,) a certain quiet self-possession and ease of manner, proclaimed as the chaperon of the party, presented in her appearance a striking contrast to her friend. In figure she was tall and exquisitely formed; her air and deportment were at once easy, graceful and dignified; and as she turned from the picture before her to address some observations to the gentleman in attendance, she discovered a countenance as lovely as was ever revealed to the admiring gaze of man, from under a pink crape bonnet. It was one of those faces, which once seen, are as vividly impressed upon the me-

Venice, on a fine day; (for I conclude it rained incessantly during her stay there,) and the Venice of most travellers. But, *giusto cielo!* —is that enough? The painter who deserves the name, views his subject through a poetic medium; invests the representation of material objects, with something of a spiritualized character, and sheds over the dingy realities of palpable existence, the splendours of a glowing imagination!—True,—I recognise the outline of St. Mark's column, and trace the oriental architecture of the *Palazzo Ducale;*—but where is the Venice of Childe Harold—the Venice of the Foscari and Falieri—the mistress of the seas —the Venice of Shakspeare and Otway!"

His lordship's rhapsody was unfortunately here cut short, and the current of his eloquent enthusiasm impeded for a moment by the approach of our hero and Lumley.

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"Oh, Captain Calverley," exclaimed Miss Caryl, after the usual greetings had passed

on all sides, "do give us your opinion. We have had quite a battle with Lord Belvedere, about Canaletti; he's so severe, you can't think!"

"We have been endeavouring," said Lady Belvedere, "to correct our own imperfect notions on the subject of the arts, by the aid of my cousin Lord Belvedere's superior knowledge. He has just returned from a two years' residence in Italy, and may fairly be considered an authority."

"My dear Belvedere," said Lumley, "allow me most sincerely to congratulate you on the termination of your erratic labours. Travelling should never be undertaken but when it is unavoidable; with you I conclude it was a necessary evil; at all events it is a good thing over."

"Your felicitations are rather premature, my dear Lumley, as I propose making a tour in the east, shortly; and I must beg to dissent from your philosophy. To those who

travel in the proper spirit, and whom nature and education have qualified to avail themselves of the advantages which travelling affords, it is one of the highest moral enjoyments which this shop-keeping world supplies. I would recommend it particularly, as refining the taste, and expanding the intellect."

"But, my dear lord," said Lumley, "it is surely cultivating the mind, at the expense of the body. If you travellers would only speak candidly, what are the boasted results of your wanderings, which any man is not competent to attain, without stirring from his sofa or his *bergère*? Where is the beauty or the philosophy of being turned inside out on board a steam-boat, or being shut up with half-a-dozen fat women and squalling children in a rumbling, dislocating machine called a *diligence;* paralysed by damp sheets at night,—poisoned with bad cookery at inns,—pillaged by *aubergistes*,—rifled by *douaniers*, and pestered about passports by dirty municipal au-

thorities at every *bicoque* of a town you come to!"

"Dear! how droll you are, Captain Lumley!" exclaimed Miss Caryl, "just as if Lord Belvedere travelled in those horrid *diligences.*"

"Well, suppose he travels in his own britska; it answers just as well for my argument. If it is well-built, he may be nearly as comfortable as I am in my *Napoleon;* but I have still the advantage of him, for I am independent of good or bad roads, and am not obliged to consign my purse-strings to the tender mercies of some shark of a courier, who protects you from the voracity of the minor fry, only that he may be more effectually enabled to devour you himself."

"You seem to speak feelingly, Captain Lumley, at all events," observed Lady Belvedere.

"No; I am only availing myself of the

experience of others. I have never travelled, and never mean to travel;—I am obliged occasionally, for my sins, to visit Windsor; but that is the extent of my peregrinations. Whenever my battalion is ordered to Dublin, I shall sell out, and repose on my laurels."

"Well!" said Lord Belvedere, "as long as our friend acknowledges that he has no personal acquaintance with the delights or annoyances of travelling, he must really excuse me, if I decline entering into an argument on the subject. I honour his candour, and respect his ingenuity; but he will allow me to say, that he speaks *sans connaissance de cause*."

"Of course, my dear lord; and as long as my friends are willing to take the trouble of doing all the travelling for me, I hope I may be excused for staying at home and laughing at them. Here is our poor friend Calverley, however, whose case I think no laughing matter; for he is about to undertake a long

River; for I am told his affairs are completely *abimées*. But, my dear Lady Belvedere, do look at that woman who has just entered the room; she is the very image of one of the Sybils in the Capella Sistina.—A most extraordinary resemblance!"

"He is going out to Madras, as an aide-de-camp," said Lumley; "a species of fetch-and-carry existence bad enough at all times, and under any circumstances; but when the horrors of an eastern climate are superadded to the *regulation* annoyances of his position, I think he may fairly claim the sympathy of all benevolent natures. Does not your ladyship pity him?"

"The extent of my compassion must be regulated by the nature of his own feelings on the subject;" said Lady Belvedere, "I presume he is not going against his will?"

"Why, as to that, I fear it is merely what my friend Belvedere would probably call '*la scelta d'Obson;*' the death of his father has

you think it pretty and sentimental to talk of banishment, separation from friends, *et ainsi de reste*: but I believe that the excitement of new scenes, and the interest of new faces will always be sufficient to counterbalance any little *désagrémens* of that description. The love of adventure,—the rage for novelty,—every thing tends to reconcile you to a change which to our sex, would in general be productive of unqualified misery."

"I am afraid you give us too much credit for practical philosophy. Judging by my own



coat, and a sky blue neckcloth?—Moreover, the saffron hue of his complexion, spoke not of hopeless love or secrets dire;—but was too plainly indicative of pituitary inconvenience; in short, his whole aspect was commemorative of Calcutta, and prophetic of Cheltenham; it seemed to combine all the distinctive notions which compose the abstract idea of a Bengal N. I. Major, on sick furlough!

"I really see nothing particularly mysterious about your unknown friend," said Lumley, "except that his yellow face and blue neckcloth make him look like an incarnation of the Edinburgh Review. The fact is, the poor man is evidently a nabob, just imported; who has delivered himself over to the discretion of a Strand tailor, on his way from Leadenhall Street. Having seen nothing but copper-coloured Venuses, during his twenty years' residence up the country, as viceroy over some rajah or nizam,—who is nephew to the sun, uncle to the moon, and cousin-germain to

French clock! I do so want Lady Belvedere to buy it; it is only two hundred guineas. A mere trifle to her, I am sure. It is the sweetest thing in the world; you touch a spring, and out jump two little figures, that actually dance the *pas de deux* of Leicester and Amy Robsart, in Kenilworth!"

"Perhaps, Captain Calverley," said Lady Belvedere, "you would have the goodness to let Lord Belvedere know that we are about to take our departure. He has most ungallantly deserted us; but as he came here to-day expressly to do the honours of the collection, I am afraid I ought not to leave the gallery without announcing his liberation in form."

It has been said that a lady never makes a request, or issues a command, without assigning a reason for it; and in spite of the assertion of Juvenal, that remorseless calumniator of the fair sex, there really appears to be some foundation for the remark.

Probably from established habits of autho-

Whether it was in accordance with the theory which I have here ventured to put forth, on a subject hitherto unapproached by philosophical investigation, that Lady Belvedere thought it necessary to account for her request, by the explanatory clause which accompanied it, or whether the aforesaid clause was added to the decree, with more reference to particular feelings than to general principles, we need not stop to inquire; but certain it is that our hero undertook the mission with all the more alacrity, from the manner in which his instructions were worded. His lordship, however, saved him the trouble of a very laborious search, by making his appearance at the precise moment when Calverley was about to depart in quest of him.

"Ten thousand pardons, *mesdames*," said he; "I have been carried away quite *malgré moi;* I should have been back ages ago, only that I met an old Roman acquaintance, who took the opportunity of reading me a letter

"Which means, I presume," said Calverley, *sotto voce* to Lady Belvedere, as he handed her into the britska, "that, unlike Fusbos, he *has* 'a singing face'. Really, your friend the Apollo will be the death of me. I wonder how your ladyship can stand such constant exposure to the beams of the god of day. That last sally was a perfect *coup-de-soleil*.

ceals its homely material, the boot itself "loses half its evil, by losing all its coarseness!"

From the stage, the full tide of song rolls with the combined majesty of Rossini and Pasta; the venerable priests of the Euphrates, celebrate the glories of the river god,—and the assembled court of Babylon, arrayed in Oriental splendour, vow eternal fealty to the chosen of the Assyrian queen!

Survey the house—a smile is on every face, and plaudits escape from every lip, as the electric impulse spreads around; and even the well-bred apathy of fashion gives place to a rapturous burst of momentary enthusiasm.

It is a bright, a joyous scene! How unlike the gloomy, care-fraught world, which philosophers decry, and at which cynics rail! And yet, could we penetrate this brilliant and polished surface—could we remove the veil which shrouds the secret thought, and glide, Asmodeus-like, into the inmost recesses of the mansion—could we set at naught the discipline

vious rancour! And even where the nobler qualities of our nature are predominant, where the soul is not base, nor the heart corrupted—what *ennui*, what disappointment, what disgust! In nine out of ten, should we not read of wasted youth, of misdirected talents, of blasted hopes, of blighted ambition! Alas! alas! the stage-lights serve but to divide two sets of actors!

But enough! The enchantment is at an end, —the spell is broken. I hear a flat note in that *fagotto solo;* Semiramide is rouged up to the temples; Oroe's mitre is mere tinsel; I see the flare of the prompter's tallow candle —and, faugh! there are two Spanish refugees within a yard of me, who have been dining on garlic. Let us go up stairs.

Who is that fair and pensive dame, the sole occupant of a first-tier box; she who sits shrouded from the gaze of the house, by the crimson drapery of the partition, and wholly abstracted from the contemplation of the scene

fancy, but the amiable and accomplished woman under whose care she had passed the whole of her life, until the period of her marriage, had too well supplied the place of a mother, to allow of her appreciating the full extent of her early bereavement.

Childless herself, the affections of Mrs. Wilmot had centred, with truly maternal intensity, in the person of her lovely ward; while Caroline naturally clung to her only female connexion, with a devoted attachment which the sacred impulse of filial duty could scarcely have increased.

The morning of her existence had passed in as placid a course of prosperity and enjoyment as the constitution of this worrying world will allow; and though we are perfectly ready to admit, that the study of French verbs may be a grievance, the initiatory advances towards musical proficiency, a sad trial of temper, and the exercises of the tambour-frame amongst the severest of

considerable fortune in the civil service of the India Company, he had been induced when returning to his native country, to leave the whole of his property in the hands of his former agents, tempted, like so many others, by a rate of interest which more than doubled the income he would have received on vesting his money in the British Funds.—Accordingly, during the remainder of his life, he had regularly spent his five or six thousand per annum, nor had it ever occurred to him that the firm of Messrs. Saunderson, Macquarrie, and Co., were more liable to the contingency of failure, than the three per cent. Consols.

On his death he had bequeathed the whole of his fortune to his wife, who, impressed by a similar confidence in the stability of her agents, had continued to live up to her full income. But the bubble at length burst; and one fine morning, she was courteously and delicately informed, by her man of business, that the

his thirty thousand a-year, and viscount's coronet?

But let not the reader do injustice to the feelings of our heroine; she was not dazzled by the lustre of his rank, or captivated by the length of his rent-roll. As far as her personal wishes were concerned, no fair visionary, yet unskilled in the vulgar and material realities of life, could more enthusiastically appreciate the delights of love in a cottage. But her affection for the amiable being to whom she was indebted for every blessing which had yet fallen to her share, forbade her to hesitate in a case which presented nothing but an alternative of penury; and her acceptance of Lord Belvedere became in her eyes so decided a duty, that it ceased almost to be a sacrifice.

And yet it *was* a sacrifice, though not a degrading one. She did not indeed love him, for girls of seventeen do not fall in love with gentlemen of fifty.—But she did not love elsewhere; and though Lord Belvedere was

union of hearts, than a mutual feeling of hostility, but too often springing from prejudice, and nourished by misrepresentation.

We are greatly tempted to illustrate this our view of the question, by sundry fanciful and *newly-discovered* analogies, geometrical, physical, and metaphysical;—such as the meeting of extremes; the unchangeable distance of parallel lines; the ultimate subsidence and perfect amalgamation of certain solutions, after the furious tempest of effervescence which signalizes their first conjunction, as contrasted with the behaviour of those two well-behaved and inoffensive liquids, oil and water, which, although they make no noise about the matter, and exhibit no signs of irritation when brought into contact, have never yet been known to unite. But we are rather cautious how we enlarge upon such subjects, being well aware, in the first place, that our own particular cranium exhibits but a very feeble development of the mathematical organ, and secondly,

perfection, and worthy to be cited as an example to all ladies who may be similarly circumstanced.

'It is difficult to discover why the ancients, in their elastic system of polytheism, thought proper to assign to the same divinity, the guardianship of female purity, and the superintendance of the boisterous exercise of the chase. Was it, that by a delicate and refined compliment to the fair of those days, they considered her first-mentioned office as virtually a sinecure, and added the venatorial attributes to her more truly celestial character, out of respect to some mythological economist of the *côté gauche*, who might be disposed to remodel the cabinet of Olympus, upon the principles of Joseph Hume? Or, was it not rather that her authority "in the field," might enable her as she saw fit, to reward the faithful, and punish the false votaries of her purer and more hallowed shrine? If we incline to this latter hypothesis, we shall be justified in the conclusion, that it was owing

prehensive code of social decorum could supply. With all her amiability of deportment and sweetness of countenance, there was that about her which at once checked the advances of the most impudent, and paralysed the efforts of the most designing;—a certain quiet dignity of demeanour, as remote from prudery as it was hostile to flirtation:—an additional charm of manner which heightens the feeling, while it restrains the expression of our homage, and never suffers admiration to get the better of respect.

Amongst the crowd of her adorers there was, however, one whose devotion, though less openly proclaimed, had assumed a more serious form than the idolatry of most of his brother worshippers, for his views were decidedly matrimonial. Fully aware of the consequences of a second marriage to her in a financial point of view, he had resolved to lay his fortune and coronet at her feet.

plished, and the fashion; in short, a necessary evil in its most mitigated form.

The species of relationship which existed between them, gave him many facilities of intercourse with Lady Belvedere which he could not have otherwise obtained, and of these he gladly availed himself; but he was too cautious to risk his ultimate success by any premature declaration of his sentiments; and, for the present, he was content to mask under the semblance of friendship and kinsmanly regard, those advances which he hoped would lead in the sequel to a far more intimate and endearing connexion.

What were his chances of success, the reader may perhaps divine from what he already knows; but if his penetration be at fault, he must make up his mind to await the regular development of these and sundry other matters in the course of the narrative which we are about to resume. We return to Lady Belvedere and her Opera-box.

This, however, from the conspicuous position of her box, and her generally acknowledged claims to admiration, was too common an occurrence to excite her particular notice; —but amongst the numerous specimens of the "human face divine," of which she at the moment, enjoyed a bird's-eye view, she was rather startled to observe the countenance of the identical gentleman who had appeared to watch her so closely at the British Gallery, and who was now evidently resuming his functions of taciturn observation, not, as befitted the place and occasion, through *lorgnon, lorgnette,* or *Devonshire,* but positively and unequivocally gazing, not to say staring, to the full extent of a couple of huge, dark eyes, which to poor Lady Belvedere's excited imagination, gleamed like those of a basilisk. His outward man had undergone a change analogous to the scene and the hour. But a set of the most costly shirt-breast-buttons, a crimson and gold brocaded under-waistcoat,

door. Her apprehensions returned, and the relief to her nerves was unspeakable, when in walked,—*not* the *inconnu*,—but our friend Harry Calverley.

"Alone, lady fair?" said our hero. "It is somewhat rare to find the divinity in the temple, and no worshippers at the shrine!—But I am early at my devotions."

"Because there is not standing-room in the pit, I suppose," said Lady Belvedere, laughing. "I *am*, however, unusually solitary to-night;—for the fair Julia has disappointed me. Lady Dorking has a dinner-party, and her presence was *de rigueur*. But she has secured the escort of one of her brothers, as soon as propriety will allow her to make her escape,—and I expect her here long before the *ballet*.—How divine Pasta is to-night!"

"Very—that is, I conclude so. For to say the truth, I have not yet heard a note. I have been dining with my mother, at Hampton Court, and only rode up half-an-hour ago.

bathing,—for fear of sharks and crocodiles,—against hunting, for fear of tigers,—against eating and drinking, for fear of a whole host of diseases that follow in the train of such reprehensible indulgences;—but above all—and in this, the maternal eloquence was most strenuously exerted,—against falling in love with any of the fair damsels, who are annually sent out to those matrimonial regions, with a view to such contingencies."

"Upon my word," said Lady Belvedere, "I cannot say that in your estimate of perils, you exhibit much of the spirit of chivalry. In the good old times, a true knight thought it his duty to encounter all the dragons that came in his way,—for the sake of some fair lady;—but *now*, it appears, the lady herself is a more formidable monster than all the crocodiles in the Ganges, or all the tigers in the jungle."

"You will recollect that I am enumerating the apprehensions of others,—not my own,"

very—extraordinary.—So unexpected—I must beg you to recollect.—"

"I do—I do!"—interrupted Harry, with vehemence. "I recollect every thing! Much that I should wish—much that it is my duty to forget! I know that, circumstanced as I am—as we both are—it is madness—or worse than madness to allude thus openly to feelings which it were now hopeless to indulge. But ruined and despairing as I am!—about to carry my withered hopes and desperate fortunes to climes far distant—from whence I may never return—can you blame me, if I seize this first—this last opportunity, to tell you—how fondly—how devotedly—how hopelessly I love you!"

For a moment she answered not—but her look was fixed—her countenance pale as death. At length, by a violent effort, she recovered a sufficient degree of composure to venture on a reply,—the assumed calmness and dignity of which were sadly at variance with the tremu-

to imagine that I could obtain your *regard;* but, I confess it had never occurred to me that I could be the object of your *scorn,*—that the expression of my devoted attachment could be considered as an insult!—But enough! I solicit your pardon for my temerity, and will no longer annoy you by my presence.—Farewell."—So saying he moved to the door.

"Stay!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere, in great agitation, "one moment! You have misunderstood me!—It was not my wish—you know well—you *must* know, it was not—to hurt your feelings!—If I have done so—I ask your forgiveness; but you should make allowance for my situation! You have yourself said that such thoughts are madness—that it is hopeless to indulge them!—Why—why then, distress both yourself and me by giving them utterance?"

"You are right!" said he, after a pause, "and I am alone to blame—I should have carried my secret to the grave—at least if that

"Dearest Lady Belvedere!" exclaimed Calverley, eagerly seizing the hand which she held out to him in token of forgiveness, and detaining it within both his, in spite of the not very vigorous efforts she made to release it: "Dearest Lady Belvedere!—that assurance will be the only gleam of comfort—the only ray of hope which my forlorn prospects will admit, and if ever—"

What might be the nature, object, or probable result of Calverley's hypothetical contingency, we are unfortunately unable to ascertain; for at that precise moment, the box-keeper's key was again heard to turn in the lock,—and our heroine had barely time to snatch away her hand, and assume an attitude of profound attention to the business of the scene,—while our hero began turning over the leaves of the *libretto* with a degree of energy and perseverance perfectly incomprehensible during the execution of "Giorno d'Orror,"—ere the curtain was drawn aside, and revealed

of very *crickety* hands, whose ruddy and chilblained aspect was rendered all the more conspicuous by the turquoise rings that adorned a finger of each.

"Here I am at last, my dear Car'," exclaimed Julia; "I thought I should never have got away. How do, Captain Calverley? Such a stupid dinner, my dear—you have no idea! Was it not, John?"

"Confoundedly so, indeed," responded John, settling his shirt-collar, and bowing bodily from the hip-joint as he was recognised by Lady Belvedere, while his whole face assumed the hue of the curtains, in spite of his strenuous endeavours to avoid so humiliating an evidence of timidity; "but," added he, with a sudden flash of *disinvoltura*, resulting from the courage of despair, "a dinner party, unless when particularly well selected,—now, really, what you would call *bien choisie*,—is always *such* a bore!"

Belvedere, scarcely knowing what she said, but anxious to say something.

"No—not very," answered Julia; "twelve, I believe; but it was insufferably dull. A set of drowsy elderly people! no general conversation. The only *tolerably* young person was Captain Lumley; and he was so sulky, he never opened his lips the whole day, except to speak to that old wretch, Madame de Stackelberg—you know how I hate her; and that drony, ceremonious, prosy husband of her's! How *very* stupid all the *corps diplomatique* are just now! Do you not think so, Captain Calverley?"

"Why, really," said our hero, laughing, "I am afraid I can scarcely subscribe to so sweeping a censure on so distinguished a class. If such an idea were to get abroad, I should fear it might endanger the stability of those 'friendly relations," of which we never fail to hear in His Majesty's speech."

"Oh, I am sure I do not know any thing

about that; but I *do* know that I have been sitting at dinner next to Count Borenoff, *et que j'en ai pour la vie!*"

"Well," said John, "now that I have delivered you into safe custody, Julia, I believe I must wish you good-night! as I have all sorts of engagements this evening. Lady Belvedere will have the goodness to take charge of you, I dare say."

"Oh, certainly!" said Lady Belvedere; "I will undertake to deliver her safely in Bruton Street."

"But why must you run away, John?" said Miss Caryl. "You surely mean to stay for the *ballet?*"

"Oh, yes! But there are so many people that I must look in upon."

"Oh, nonsense! Now do stay where you are, like a good boy! You are not offended by my quizzing you, are you? You know I mean nothing by it, Johnny, so don't be cross!"

This expostulation, accompanied by a playful tap of the fan on his cheek, called up a still deeper suffusion into the face of the devoted John. But it was the hue of *mauvaise honte*, not of anger; for he laughed good-humouredly, and said,

"Oh, Ju! you know I am never cross with *you;* and I am sure you may quiz me as much as ever you please; but I must go, indeed, for I am to sup at Mrs. Alwyn's; and I want to see her, to explain why I did not send an answer to her invitation. Good night!"

So saying, he made his escape.

"There now!" exclaimed Miss Caryl; "I knew exactly how it was!—it is too bad! That odious Mrs. Alwyn! Think of her inviting that boy to her suppers!"

"But, I assure you," said Calverley, laughing, "they are very good, and, sometimes, very pleasant suppers. Why should you object to her inviting your brother?"

"Oh, you know very well, Captain Calver-

ley, that horrid woman and her set are enough to ruin any young man. It is so provoking! You have no idea how wretched it makes mama, to find that she has enlisted that child in her train."

"He seems a very nice young man," said Harry; "and we must hope that he will be able to take care of himself."

"I do assure you he is the best creature in the world, if he were in good hands, poor dear! which makes it all the more vexatious. You know he is the youngest of the family, so one is naturally anxious about him. But what can we do? We must think ourselves lucky now if he does not get into all sorts of scrapes, like his brothers, before we can contrive to send him out to Vienna."

"Are you going to make a *diplomate* of him?" enquired Lady Belvedere.

"Yes!—if we can; but those people at the Foreign Office are so tiresome! We wish particularly, to get him attached to the em-

bassy at Vienna, because his cousin Tremayne is there, and might look after him a little; but Lord P********** is very sulky about it; for, you know, Dorking *would* vote against the Reform Bill, so that he really has no claim upon them."

To what extent Miss Caryl might have thought proper to enlighten them on the subject of the family plans and politics, it is impossible to say; but the entrance of Count Rodolph Piccolomini, a diplomatic *élégant*, and Mr. Bubb Tomkyns, an individual rated in the bachelor list, *à l'usage des chaperons*, as an *eligible* of the first class, diverted the ideas of the communicative Julia into a new channel; and our hero, *comme de raison*, took his departure.

As he passed along the lobby, his attention was attracted by a person who was evidently catechising one of the box-keepers, with much eagerness and perseverance, as to the proprietors and occupants of the line of

boxes near which they stood. It was no other than our "mysterious stranger."

The Cerberus, however, was rather sulky; at least his answers were vague and unsatisfactory.

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir: there's no saying from that description. There you have the ladies' names on all *them* boxes. ('Box-keeper! No. 23!'—'Coming, sir!') It may be Lady Frances Markham, or Lady Chalfont, sir; or Mrs. Finch, or Lady Belvedere; it is impossible to say, without you can tell me the very box. ('Box-keeper! the Duchess of Jedburgh's box!') Coming, my lord!" and he ran off.

Calverley was in no mood to enjoy either the tragic sublimity of Pasta, or the sylph-like grace of Taglioni; but he was unwilling to leave the theatre while there was a chance of his services being accepted in escorting Lady Belvedere to her carriage; and if even, as was probable, her party might

be too well supplied with *beaux* to need his assistance, he could not make up his mind to lose the opportunity of seeing her again on her way out.

He, therefore, threw himself on one of the ottomans in the round room, from which he could command a view of Lady Belvedere's box, determined there to await the conclusion of the performance; and it may well be imagined that, after what had occurred, he had quite sufficient occupation in his own reflections to while away the interval.

These reflections were not altogether of a desponding character. In spite of the species of reproof which the *words* of Lady Belvedere seemed to convey, her manner certainly encouraged the conclusion, that she did not absolutely view him with indifference. Her visible agitation, her anxiety to remove from his mind all feeling of offence, and,

other, before the blighting influence of misfortune, or the wand of the arch disenchanter, Time!

Our hero was, however, soon roused from his reverie by an individual flinging himself nearly at full-length on a neighbouring ottoman, with a *momentum* that produced a sympathetic vibration, like the slight shock of an earthquake, in every object within a considerable circumference; the abrupt movement in question being coupled with a sigh which might have served as the *obligato* accompaniment to the descent of a paviour's *ramrod*. Calverley turned to examine the cause of this commotion, and again recognsied the oriental aspect of our inquisitive friend.

"Poor man!" thought Calverley. "His liver, or perhaps his digestion, is sadly deranged. But he might nevertheless have some consideration for the foundations of the house, and the nerves of his neighbours. If people are suffering from *dyspepsia* to so

a look of intense anguish; and even at the distance from which Calverley made his observation, a tear might be seen to steal down the wasted and furrowed cheek of the stranger. But whatever it might be which thus excited his sensibilities,—after a little time, he thrust it hastily into his bosom, and starting from his seat, paced the room with rapid footsteps, and no zephyr-like tread.

Harry was both surprised and interested by the behaviour of the unknown; for though he had read of gentlemen wearing an aspect:—

"As hyænas in love may be fancied to look,"

this was the first time he had ever seen a genuine "Bengal tiger" in a fit of the sentimentals!

With the exception, however, of the tendency to excessive decoration which his toilet displayed, so characteristic of the newly imported East Indian, there was nothing of

the *tiger* in the appearance of our mysterious friend. His figure was tall and commanding; his features were aristocratic, and his whole air and manner spoke of gentle blood and patrician habits. His high expansive forehead, the contour of which was more clearly defined from the scantiness of the hair in its vicinity, would have been a glorious study for a phrenologist; his Roman nose would have supplied Lavater with ample materials for a physiognomical lecture, his full, dark, expressive eye, was evidently formed "to threaten and command," and his countenance was generally indicative of intellectual power and energy of character.

But Calverley's attention was soon called off from the restless nabob, by the entrance of Lord Belvedere and another gentleman into the viscountess's box, and the consequent evacuation of the place, by the previous garrison; Count Rodolph Piccolomini, and Mr. Bubb Tomkyns.

These two worthies now sauntered into the round-room, which was gradually losing its deserted appearance; a few straggling *élégans* having taken refuge there, from the heat of the house, and the *ennui* of a too-often repeated *ballet*.

"*Quelle chaleur!*" exclaimed the Count. "*On étouffe!*"

"*D'honneur! on n'y saurait tenir!*" responded Mr. Bubb Tomkyns, in an affected tone, and very loud, in order that all within ear-shot might be duly sensible of the Parisian accuracy of his pronunciation. But fearful of hazarding his well-earned reputation by any superfluous display of his acquirements as a linguist, he continued in English:—

"Pretty little person, that—the Belvi—*n'est-ce pas, comte?*

"*Pardon!*" said the count, "who you mean?"

"Why, *la petite vicomtesse*, whom we have just left," said Tomkyns.

roture ; — dat you vill all be noble : *car enfin, tout le monde* have deir *écusson*, deir *armoiries* —de *livrée!*" " *Mais vous, par exemple, mon cher Bobb,*" continued the count, with real or well-assumed simplicity; for the slight curl of the lip, lurking under his *moustache,* made the extent of his ignorance somewhat problematical. " *Vous n'êtes pas Baron ; Mais sans doute, vous êtes noble? N'est ce pas?*"

The *naïveté* of this question was extremely gratifying to the by-standers, some of whom were tolerably acquainted with the plebeian origin of the person to whom it was addressed, and could scarcely refrain from an audible titter, as Mr. Bubb Tomkyns, blushing to the roots of his hair, replied :—

" Why — as to that — um — of course — um — you know, *Je suis très-bon gentilhomme.*"

" Ah," resumed the persevering and analytical count, " *J'entends, — gentilhomme — mais non pas grand seigneur !*"

This was too much for the gravity of the

entourage, and particularly of Lumley, who had just entered the room, and was attracted by the singular train of conversation, carried on as it was in unusually loud tones, on the part of Mr. Tomkyns, from an anxiety to display his *finery*, and occasionally his French,—and on that of the count, from an eagerness to make himself understood in a language which he spoke imperfectly.

"My dear Tomkyns!" exclaimed Lumley, after indulging in a regular burst of merriment, in which he was partially joined by the people in his neighbourhood, "what is all this about? Are you actually performing Mephistopheles to Count Piccolomini's Faust, or canvassing to be made a canon of Strasbourg?—My dear count, in the pride of your *pre-adamite* pedigree, you should really have some compassion for the feelings of our financial aristocracy, and not be so minutely inquisitorial."

"Oh," said Tomkyns, with an indignant

toss of the head, "I shall hand the count over to you, and he may enquire about *your* claims to ancestry, if he thinks proper.—*Financial* aristocracy, indeed!" added he in an under tone.

"If he wishes to do so, most noble Bubb!" rejoined Lumley, "I will save him the trouble, by assuring him that I know little and care less about the matter. I had once a grandfather, who was such a confounded bore, that his acquaintance extinguished all my ardour for genealogical research, and I have cut all my ancestors in compliment to him."

This declaration produced a general laugh, and afforded Mr. Bubb Tomkyns an opportunity of subsiding into his usual state of self-complacent coxcombry.

"So," said the count, recurring to the old topic,—for he greatly admired Lady Belvedere's jointure, and was not aware of its evanescent character,—"Miladi is *roturière?*"

"Why, really," said Tomkyns, "it is diffi-

"*C'est dommage!*" said the count. *Mais, c'est égal!—elle est très-jolie, et fort aimable.*"

"Umph!—pretty well as to that," said Tomkyns, who was rather dissatisfied with the share of her ladyship's notice which he had obtained, on that particular evening; "she can be agreeable enough, when she thinks proper,—but she is a most egregious flirt."

The application of a lighted match to a train of gunpowder, could not have produced a more instantaneous ignition, than did the remark of the unconscious Tomkyns, acting on the temper of our hero, which was, as we have seen, in a highly combustible state;—and if the simile, as we rather fear, be more accurate than original, we must only claim the indulgence of the reader, for the use of a hackneyed illustration, in favour of its superior applicability, compared with any which our memory or imagination can supply.

Calverley started up from his seat, and with a countenance pale from rage, addressed Mr. Tomkyns in no very gentle tone:—

"Allow me to enquire, sir, of whom you are speaking?"

"Sir?" exclaimed the astonished Tomkyns, opening his gooseberry eyes to their utmost distension.

"I request to know, sir," continued Calverley, with increased vehemence, "of what lady you think proper to speak in such disrespectful terms?"

"And *I*, sir," said Tomkyns, "request to know by what right or authority you presume to enquire into the subject of my private conversation."

"If you think it expedient, sir, to extend the benefit of your private conversation to the whole room, and in so doing, to make the character of a lady the subject of malignant and slanderous comment, you must take

the consequences. I now ask you, sir,—was that last observation of yours intended to apply to Lady Belvedere?"

Mr. Bubb Tomkyns was an ass and a coxcomb, but he was not a coward. No man, however, is much gratified by finding himself on the verge of a quarrel brought on by his own folly; more especially when, as in the present case, he is conscious of having made an unjustifiable assertion, and indulged his rancorous feelings at the expense of truth.

It was this unpleasant conviction that made Tomkyns hesitate for a few moments ere he replied:—

"If I decline answering your question, sir, it is not that I have any apprehension of the awful consequences you hint at; but because I laugh at your threats, and defy your indignation.—If you persist in your enquiries, you do it at your peril!"

"Then, sir," said Calverley in a loud voice,

and with a most minacious aspect—" give me leave to tell you"——

But Lumley, who had witnessed the whole transaction, and not being himself in love with Lady Belvedere, could not at all comprehend why Calverley thought it necessary to stand forth as her champion,—particularly in a case where her name had not been mentioned,—interrupted the expression of his ire, and seizing him by the arm, endeavoured to draw him away from the scene of action.

" For God's sake, Calverley," said he, " are you mad? What does all this mean? It is the veriest Quixotism!"

But before he had time to conclude his remonstrances, the appearance of the fair cause of the *fracas*, issuing from her box, under the escort of Lord Belvedere, and followed by Miss Caryl and Captain Wyndham, produced on the warring elements of social strife, the sedative effects of Virgil's " *Quos Ego*—."

Mr. Bubb Tomkyns was conscience-stricken, —Calverley, taken aback, in nautical phrase, —Lumley silenced, —and Count Piccolomini lost in astonishment and mystification. In short, the *partie quarrée* were nearly as embarrassed as the *détenus* of Æolus, on the occasion referred to, when rebuked by Neptune for the unwarrantable abuse of their "*day rule.*"

"I move the adjournment of the debate," said Lumley, in a low tone, and endeavouring to give a jocular turn to the affair, "to this day six months.—*Ah çà, messieurs, qu'on se donne la main,—on je vous fais mettre aux arrêts!*"

Both gentlemen, however, were sulky. A few words passed between them, in a very low voice, in which "address,"—"the Clarendon,"—"Junior United Service,"—were alone audible; —and Mr. Bubb Tomkyns walked off with his friend.

"My dear Harry! said Lumley. "Pray

"Anything happened!" echoed Calverley, with affected astonishment and a forced laugh. "Oh dear no; what should give you such an idea? We were discussing — I am sure I forget what—Taglioni, I believe—or Pasta, was it not, Lumley?"

"Dear, how odd! that you should not recollect!" said Miss Caryl.

"Why, the fact is," said Lumley, coming up to the assistance of his friend, with the advantages of a cool head and a calm judgment,—as much to the purpose as the fresh troops of Blucher at the close of Waterloo, "Calverley argues as an Irishman fights, not for the sake of the cause, but for the fun of a *fracas*, and the affair once concluded, thinks no more of the subject of the dispute, than of the broken heads he has inflicted during its progress."

"While you, no doubt," said Lady Belvedere, somewhat re-assured by his well-assumed *nonchalance*, "pique yourself on a more phi-

losophical mode of proceeding, and contend for principles."

"I? by no means; I never contend at all, if I can avoid it. I am equally averse to intellectual and corporeal gymnastics; and although when attacked, I may in either case be forced to use the weapons with which nature or education has furnished me, I should as soon think of volunteering a boxing-match as an argument."

Here the return of Lord Belvedere, announcing that the carriage was "up," and a *howl* to the same effect from below, only intelligible to the initiated, put an end to the conversation, and admonished the ladies of the necessity for their immediate departure.

Lord Belvedere and Wyndham were "in waiting," consequently, our hero and Lumley were necessarily *plantés*, and poor Calverley was obliged to submit with all the philosophy he could muster, to the mortification of seeing

his "favourite aversion" walk off in triumph with the lady of his love. But she vouchsafed to him a parting smile, that almost compensated his ill fortune in other respects.

"Fitz, I am afraid I shall require your services," said Calverley, "I should suppose matters can scarcely rest as they are."

"Well!" said Lumley, I'll see you to-morrow; and in the mean time, as the Irish malefactor said to his *compagnon de potence*, 'Keep up your spirits, the worst is to come;' but in the name of all that is preposterous,—*Que diable alliez vous faire dans cette galère?*"

"Oh, we are all wonderful adepts in that sort of retrospective foresight; but were the case your own, you would have done just the same, I dare say. However, the mischief is done, and we must abide the consequences. I reckon upon you."

"You may; but I can't stop to discuss the affair to-night. I have promised Armida

Alwyn to join her party of *ensorcelés* at supper, and I am anxious to go there for a another reason. Poor Lady Dorking, with whom I dined, is in all sorts of alarms about her hopeful son, that foolish boy, John Caryl, —who has lately entered himself as a student under this distinguished professor of Arts and *Humanities;* and she begged I would have an eye on him, if he goes there to-night, that I may save the tender innocent from being drowned in *Chateau Margaux*, or fleeced at écarté. Though as to the last article, I should imagine he is as little worth the shearing as his satanic majesty's *troupeau*, according to the proverb."

So saying, he walked off, and Calverley was preparing to follow, when he was accosted to his great surprise by our friend, the "mysterious stranger."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he, with considerable hesitation, "I am going to take a great liberty,—but, would you have the

goodness to inform me, who that lady is, whom you were speaking to just now;—that most lovely woman in the turban?"

Calverley was astonished, as well he might be, at such an unusual development of the "organ of inquisitiveness," in a stranger. But an indiscreet question does not of necessity require an uncivil answer, and he saw no particular reason for making a mystery of our heroine's name and condition. He replied, somewhat drily however,—

"That, sir, is Lady Belvedere."

"What," said the unknown," she is married then?"

"She is a widow, sir, "answered Harry, rather annoyed by the nature of the question.

"Stay, sir, one moment,—I entreat—it is not mere idle curiosity, I assure you. Who was she?"

"Really, sir," said Calverley, whose small stock of patience, in his peculiar frame of

mind, was now completely exhausted, by the perseverance of his interrogator, "for all further information on the subject, I believe I must refer you to Burke's Peerage. I wish you good night."

CHAPTER VII.

After a night of broken and feverish slumbers, the natural consequence of the exciting scenes through which he had just passed, Calverley awoke to the full consciousness of a very unpleasant position, and the full enjoyment of a most philosophic state of doubt as to the preponderance of the heroic or the asinine character in his behaviour of the preceding evening; being uncertain, in short, whether, on that memorable occasion, he had not, in the ardour and buoyancy of his chivalrous feelings, gracefully vaulted over the narrow

boundary which separates the sublime from the ridiculous.

Not that his personal courage was of that treacherous quality which, prompt to lead its possessor into scrapes, leaves him to find his way out of them without assisting in his extrication;—a species of *ignis-fatuus* heroism, that suddenly withdraws its light at the precise moment when the imprudent victim of its treachery, having been unwittingly decoyed by the deceitful blaze from the paths of peace and civility, sinks chin-deep into the morass of "consequences." We trust the reader needs not the assurance of our hero's willingness, on all occasions, to act up to the strict letter of the code of honour. In cases where the appeal to arms was advisable, his discharge of the unpleasant "social duty" in question, was as little connected with feelings of personal apprehension as may be consistent with the constitution of human nature. But he had serious misgivings as to the pro-

priety of his interference with respect to Lady Belvedere. He could not but fear that in taking such public and hostile notice of an expression which, however injurious it might be to the epic beauty of her character, could not be said to cast any imputation on her honour,—an expression, moreover, whose reference to her was only established by circumstantial evidence,—he might himself have more seriously compromised her reputation, should her name, as was not improbable, be bandied about in the gossip of the world as the cause of a duel between two parties unauthorized, either by blood or alliance, to interfere in her concerns.

Flirtation is indeed an offence of so very vague a character, that it baffles all attempt at analysis. It takes in a range of conduct far too extensive to admit of its imputation being looked upon as a definite charge; the weight of the accusation varying materially according to the age, the humour, the temper, and the

position of those with whom it originates, as well as those against whom it is alleged. It may be generally assumed, however, that it stops far short of positive criminality, and, in its more ordinary acceptation, is reconcileable with perfect innocence of intention and purity of heart.

Calverley felt all this; he was conscious that he had himself, on more than one occasion, uttered similar remarks concerning ladies of his acquaintance, without the slightest idea of aspersing their character, or sullying the brightness of their fair fame. Would, then, Lady Belvedere be much impressed by his chivalrous endeavour to wrest an idle and inconsiderate expression into a serious charge affecting her respectability, and demanding a public retractation? Would she not rather condemn the ill-judged officiousness of her self-constituted champion, whose Quixotic zeal was likely to prove more injurious in its effects than the feeble malice of her maligners?

What a pity it is that reason, whose office it should be to warn us of the snares which passion spreads in our path, generally waits in silence until we are fairly entangled, raising her voice to upbraid us, when too late, for our imprudence in meeting those dangers which she might so easily have taught us to avoid! —

But what is done, cannot be undone; nor what is said, be unsaid, at least, without certain results as to character that invariably accompany the swallowing of a man's own words; unless when that uncomfortable process of deglutition takes place within the walls of parliament. So Calverley got up, went through the operations of the toilet with his usual precision, shaved himself with wonderful accuracy and steadiness, and sat down to breakfast—with what appetite he might.

There he sat in his *bergère*,—slowly discussing a cup of chocolate, coquetting with two or three narrow strips of thin dry toast, and

wholly insensible to the attractions of a roast fowl which lay unnoticed before him,—when in walked Fitzroy Lumley.

"Ha, Fitz.!" exclaimed Calverley, "you are early in the field. Knowing your ultra-fashionable habits, as to getting up, I did not expect you these three hours. Sit down, my good fellow."

"Most willingly, for I am perfectly *assommé*. But before I explain the eventful cause of my unusual activity, I must decidedly have something in the shape of breakfast. I'll trouble you for an *échantillon* of the commissariat. The sharpness of the morning air has produced an extraordinary development of the manducative propensity. *Allez toujours*, my dear fellow! I mean both to *hop* and *fly*, as the Margate exclusives say at their *tables d'hôte*.

"Well," said Calverley, after having deposited two-thirds of the above-mentioned roast fowl on the plate of his ravenous friend, "if

you have any thing to communicate, you may as well proceed to enlighten me in the intervals of eating. But I expected you for the purposes of consultation."

"Consultation! There is nothing to consult about! Do you suppose I should have given myself the trouble of rising with the lark, on a Sunday morning, not having been in bed before three, merely for the purpose of consulting with you on the best way of getting shot at? No, sir. I am happy to say, my visit has a more agreeable motive. I am come thus early to relieve your mind from an anxiety which, no offence to your chivalry, and, in spite of all disclaimers, I consider the inevitable accompaniment of an affair of honour. By a special interposition of the divinity which protects drunken men, sleep-walkers, and lunatics,—in which last-mentioned class you must allow me to place you,—all "consequences" of your unwarrant-

mida as much countenance as their slightly-damaged characters can afford; and *en fait d'hommes*, we had Nassau, St. Leger, two or three others of her usual set,—with John Caryl, my Telemachus, 'by particular desire, and for that night only,'—my Lord Belvedere, and though last not least, our friend the illustrious Bubb Tomkyns."

"A goodly set!" said Harry; "and very edifying society for a Sunday morning!—But pray go on."

"The supper went off tolerably well," continued Lumley. "Armida was in high spirits and rouge,—ate right and left, in defiance of Doctor Paris and the night-mare,—and with respect to Champagne, set us an example that most of the party were well-disposed to follow. —The conversation was, as you may conjecture, lively, *enjoué* and particularly charitable. St. Leger was as caustic and as veracious as usual; Belvedere full of Italy and the Arts, with an occasional hint concerning scores of

Italian duchesses who had compromised their slender remains of reputation, *pour l'amour de ses beaux yeux*, and afterwards attempted to poison him for his inconstancy."

"Just like him!" said Calverley. "He is the most insufferable coxcomb! There are few people whom I detest more cordially, in a small way."

"Oh, to be sure!" said Lumley, "*et l'on sait pourquoi!*—But to resume—perhaps the greatest fun of all, was that dear sentimental old soul, Mrs. Carlingford—who sat near John Caryl, and evidently frightened the poor boy out of his wits by the resolute manner in which she made love to him.—Poor Bubb, however, was evidently sulky and low-spirited,—took but little share in the general conversation, but *en revanche*, absorbed Johannisberg and Sillery for *three*. He came in rather late, and either did not observe Lord Belvedere, who sat at the other end of the table, or perhaps did not know him; as the latter has been

abroad for two years,—and the star of Tomkyns first appeared on the horizon, during his absence.—Be that as it may, however,—as soon as the ladies had risen from table, and retired to the card-room,—just as we were all preparing to follow, old Nassau, with his usual *étourderie*, considerably augmented by his copious potations, waddled up to Tomkyns, and blundered out: 'What, my dear Bubb!—are you there? So! I'm told you got into an infernal row with Calverley to-night, at the Opera,—about a woman! How deuced silly! They say you can't be off fighting.'—'Sir,' quoth Bubb, evidently very much under the influence of the rosy god,—'I don't care what they say—or what any body says;—but this *I* say,—that I'd fight the whole town, before I *un*say a word of what I have said respecting Lady Belvedere.'—'And pray, sir,' enquired his lordship, with great suavity of aspect, and affected coolness—'what may you have thought proper to say of her ladyship?'

—' Nothing but what all the world knows, sir,' responded Tomkyns, who had evidently lost all command of himself,—' that she has no right to give herself such confounded airs —having been bought from a gang of gipsies, —and moreover, that she's an arrant flirt!— and by ——, if she don't like it, she may lump it!'—' Then, sir,' rejoined Belvedere, as cool as ever, and with his most imperturbable tone and manner, ' as Lady Belvedere's kinsman and nearest connexion, I am under the disagreeable necessity of telling you, that you have uttered a gross, calumnious, and wilful falsehood; and nothing but my respect for these gentlemen, of whose society you are unworthy, prevents me from throwing the contents of this glass in your face!'"

"What a pity," interrupted Calverley, "that he should have been withheld by any such restraining motive!—*Après?*"

"As you may imagine,"—resumed Lumley, "on this polite announcement, the uproar was

prodigious. Bubb sprang across the room to Lord Belvedere, and I verily believe would have struck him, if St. Leger and I had not interfered. But the storm of words raged so high, that our fair hostess, who was only separated from the scene of action, by the folding doors that divide the apartments,—fearing most probably for the safety of the beloved Tomkyns, who, I believe, has been for the last week or so, the Orloff or Potemkin of her court,—rushed back into the supper-room, in a most interesting agony of alarm, followed by the two other ladies, whose nerves were tuned up to the same pitch; and on observing the inflamed countenances, violent gestures, and furious language of the disputants, the three nymphs set up a simultaneous lament which would have done credit to an Irish funeral. Mrs. Alwyn appealed to the feelings of the infuriated pair, in terms that would have melted an iceberg, and tones that would have stunned an artilleryman; the Carlingford waddled up

to the corner of the room, where poor John Caryl had retired in sheer amazement and consternation,—and there sank on the ottoman, with every symptom of an *attaque de nerfs*.—But it was decidedly a *faux calcul*. There is nothing in this world so formidable as a fat woman in hysterics; and poor Telemachus could not have been more alarmed, if he had witnessed the descent of an *avalanche*. —In short, the *charivari* rose to that pitch, that the servants rushed up stairs to ascertain what was the matter,—and assist in burying the dead; and before anything like order or tranquillity could be restored, old Alwyn himself, roused out of his slumbers by the melodious sounds that awoke the midnight echoes of his mansion,—made his appearance in all the imposing majesty of a brocaded dressing-gown, and a red silk night-cap,—and by a well-timed exhortation on the *passive* duties of hospitality, contrived to reduce the hostile parties to silence, if not to reason.—He also

addressed his conjugal treasure in a strain of constitutional, but energetic remonstrance, that seemed to imply a tolerably accurate knowledge, on his part, of matters concerning which, he alone, in all London, was supposed to be ignorant.—Whereupon, I, with that discretion which, I flatter myself, is generally observable in my behaviour, set the example of retreat;—and having gently hinted to John Caryl, that I would have the pleasure of depositing him at home, I walked him off to my cabriolet, and true to my promise, saw him safely housed in Bruton Street. So after all I have witnessed, and you have heard, I think I may safely offer you my congratulations, on being so comfortably anticipated in the affair."

"*Celà dépend*," said Calverley;—"as my misunderstanding with Tomkyns was the first in the order of chronology, he may be of opinion that it should take precedence in the course of adjustment. But I wished to consult you as to the expediency of any *démarche*

on my part. For I was in such a passion last night, that I hardly recollect what passed; and am doubtful whether I should consider myself as the offended or the offending party."

"Why really, my dear Harry," said Lumley,—"to consider the matter abstractedly—and illustrate it alphabetically—if *A.* thinks proper, in a public room, and in the most public manner, to call *B.* to account, and that in very violent language, for what may have dropped from him in the course of conversation with *C.*, on a subject with which the aforesaid *A.* has no concern, direct or indirect, —and if *B.* thus publicly accused of falsehood and calumny, contents himself with refusing all explanation of his words, and calling in question *A.*'s right of interference, I think that adventurous and chivalrous capital may fairly concede to the object of his Quixotic attack, the valuable privilege of originating 'ulterior measures;' and having relieved his feelings of indignation by insulting his unconscious enemy

before the whole town, leave it to his option to estimate the degree of 'satisfaction' derivable, under the circumstances, from being shot at in the presence of a couple of 'friends.'—You are a perfect O'Trigger! By the by, I have not quite finished my statement of facts."

"I am all attention," said Harry.

"I had seen enough last night at the Alwyn's," continued Lumley, "to convince me that matters must proceed to an immediate issue, between Belvedere and Tomkyns; and,—to plead guilty to a weakness which I fear must cast some discredit on my pretension as a *poco-curante*,—I own I felt a rather unphilosophical anxiety to see you relieved from the probable consequences of your—heroism or absurdity, as you may please to call it,—and a corresponding degree of gratification on witnessing a *fracas*, the importance of which must entirely supersede the claims of your prior and insignificant skirmish.—I therefore, oblivious

of theory, and in defiance of practice, rose at seven, and proceeded to the several residences of the two champions, where, having made my enquiries, (incog. of course) I had the satisfaction to learn that they had both left town, this morning, at a very early hour;—and long ere this, I trust that they have been blazing away on Wimbledon Common, to the great amazement and edification of the surrounding furze-bushes.—And so I must have another slice of ham; for I am as hungry as Ugolino, and as exhausted as Gray's prophetess."

"Confound that fellow Belvedere!" exclaimed Harry. "He has completely jockeyed me, and will get all the credit of the affair."

"All the *dis*credit, you mean," said Lumley,—"and your share of the danger to boot; which ought to be a consolatory reflection. Perhaps your friend Bubb may give him his *quietus*, and then you will have the field to yourself."—

"Psha! Belvedere is much more likely to

bring down his man. God forbid that I should wish for the death of either—but I confess I should have liked to *wing* that puppy Tomkyns. If I *had* but knocked him down last night!"

"Why, if you had,—you would have deserved a strait waistcoat. But come, a truce with all this nonsense; you ought to be grateful to Providence for having preserved you from the annoyance of being shot at this morning, and laughed at for the remainder of the season.—Any man may make a fool of himself by getting into a scrape,—but few who do, are able to get out of it so comfortably as you have done."—

"All that may be very true," said Calverley, half soliloquizing; "but nevertheless, I wish I had knocked him down!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"My dear Caroline," exclaimed Miss Caryl, entering Lady Belvedere's boudoir with a face full of importance and consternation, "have you heard of this shocking business?"

"What business, my dear Julia?"

"This horrid duel, my dear; they say Mr. Tomkyns is positively dead."

"Good heavens! Mr. Tomkyns whom we saw last night at the Opera?"

"Yes, my dear; he has been shot through the heart this morning in Battersea Fields."

"Shot through the heart! How dreadful! and by whom, for heaven's sake?"

"Why, my dearest Car', you have surely heard of his quarrel with Lord Belvedere last night, about you?"

"About me! Gracious heaven! You are not serious, Julia?"

"Oh, my dear Lady Bel', it's too true. Poor dear John, who went to Mrs. Alwyn's, and was present at the whole affair, gave me a particular account of it this morning. He declares he never witnessed such a scene in his life. I believe Lord Belvedere knocked down Mr. Tomkyns, — and Mr. Tomkyns threw a decanter at somebody, — and then Mrs. Alwyn went into hysterics, — and I rather think the police were called in."

"But, for God's sake, my dear Julia, what can you mean by saying that they quarrelled about me? It is impossible. There could be no cause of misunderstanding on my account. You *must* be mistaken."

"No, no; I am not mistaken, I assure you. John says that Mr. Tomkyns (I am sorry the poor wretch is dead, but he was a horrid man), spoke of you in the most shocking terms! and that something was said about Captain Calverley."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere, turning as pale as death, "how have I deserved this! Julia, I entreat, I conjure you, as you value my friendship, my peace of mind,—keep me not in this horrid suspense. What have they said,—what have they *dared* to say of me?"

"Oh, my dear Caroline," said Miss Caryl, alarmed at the energy and earnestness of her friend's manner, "for mercy's sake do not agitate yourself in this way! How *can* I tell you if you are not more composed?"

"Well, well—I will be composed; but in pity, let me know the worst. Great God! that I should be the object of slander! *My* name mixed with such an affair!"

"Well, my dear, if you *must* know, John says that to the best of his recollection, Mr. Tomkyns declared that you were a sad flirt, and had originally been the leader of 'a gang of gipsies.'"

"The leader of a gang of gipsies!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere, half disposed to laugh in the midst of her anxiety, at the absurd nature of the charge. "What could he mean by that?"

"How can I tell, my dear?—they say he was more than half tipsy."

"But, Julia, you said just now that Captain Calverley's name had been mentioned, coupled with mine! How could that be?"

"My dear, you must have mistaken me altogether. What John told me, is, that he understood somebody to say, that Mr. Tomkyns had had another quarrel about you, last night, with Captain Calverley."

"What then," enquired Lady Belvedere

eagerly; "is it *he* who has shot the unfortunate man?"

"No, my dear creature; it was Lord Belvedere; and, they say, he has been wounded also."

"Was there ever any thing so extraordinary! so mysterious! But, dearest Julia, are you *sure* the poor man is dead? It would be dreadful!"

"Why, that is the report I heard a few minutes ago from Count Piccolomini; but it may be exaggerated. I have begged him to go down to the clubs, and collect all the particulars he can for us; and he has promised to do so. If I hear any thing, I will make a point of letting you know. But I must run away now, for I have promised to meet the Berties and all the world at the Zoological Gardens, it is such a lovely day; I suppose I shall see you there?"

"My dear Julia! Can you imagine that

I would appear in a public promenade on a day when I have been, however innocently, the cause of bloodshed—perhaps, of death!"

"*Mais, ma chère enfant!* it is no fault of your's, and I am sure the gardens would do you a world of good. Well, if you are determined to stay at home and fret, I cannot help it; but I must keep my appointment; so, good-bye, love."

So saying, the sentimental and volatile Miss Caryl imprinted a kiss on the forehead of her half-unconscious friend, and tripped lightly out of the room, leaving poor Lady Belvedere in a state of agitation and bewilderment, which the reader can easily imagine as the result of Miss Caryl's incomprehensible intelligence. But before she had time to collect her scattered senses, or come to any plausible conclusion as to the real meaning of what she had heard, the groom of the chambers made his

re-appearance, and announced Captain Calverley.

We look upon self-possession to be one of the most valuable qualities which bear on the intercourse of society, and one of the most essential to the character of a gentleman, considered in his *drawing-room* relations. The practice of blushing is one of which the young *aspirant* to social *succès* should divest himself as early as possible; that suffusion of the countenance not being in the case of a man, as many suppose, a proof of *modesty*, but a symptom of awkwardness and *mauvaise honte*; quite compatible with a very comfortable degree of impudence, and the absence of every thing which deserves the name of sensibility.

But as sheepishness is not modesty, so neither is callousness self-possession; and however successful the barriers of good breeding and the discipline of manners may be in suppressing the slighter and more transient emo-

tions which assail us, they are powerless indeed against the strong and genuine feelings of the heart, when unusual circumstances rouse them into action.

These observations, however digressive in appearance, are nevertheless, we beg to assure the reader, very germane to the matter in hand, being intended to explain and atone for the fact, that on finding himself in the presence of Lady Belvedere, our hero's countenance was suffused with a deep glow, such as is seldom known to shed its rich radiance over features trained in the discipline of "the world." In fact, as the truth must be told, both parties looked excessively foolish; and perhaps the embarrassment of each, was rather increased than diminished by observing the evident confusion of the other.

"I have many apologies to make," said Calverley, after the usual salutations, "for intruding upon your ladyship, at such a moment, and especially for approaching a subject which

circumstances have rendered matter of peculiar delicacy to me; but I have just heard from Miss Caryl, who was entering her carriage, at the moment that I was passing your house, that the most exaggerated statements concerning the unfortunate affair of this morning, have reached your ear, and at her particular request, I have ventured to knock at your door, for the purpose of giving you more accurate and satisfactory intelligence on the subject."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere, with a feeling of delight, which for the moment superseded every other consideration. "Then he is not dead?"

"So far from it," said Calverley, "that his surgical attendants do not consider him to be in any danger, and I believe he will be removed to his hotel in the course of the evening."

"Heaven be praised!—and Lord Belvedere?"

"Has been slightly grazed in the arm, a mere scratch, which, received in such a cause, makes him much more the object of envy than of commiseration."

A slight pause ensued; for both felt that the *terrain* was rather hazardous, after the conversation of the preceding night; and Lady Belvedere, although dying to ascertain the exact truth with respect to the origin of the duel, felt, as might be supposed, considerable delicacy in making direct enquiries on the subject, from one who was evidently involved in the affair, in a manner which it might be difficult for him to explain, without some allusion to those feelings, the expression of which, she had thought it her duty to prohibit.

But curiosity,—that *exclusively* female failing,—if we believe the *ex-parte* assertions of the other sex—curiosity—so fatal to our great ancestress Eve, and to all the *Mesdames* Bluebeard, except one, — was destined to triumph over sundry antagonizing reflections,

on the present occasion; and certainly if ever the spirit of investigation, as displayed in the conduct of the fair sex, can be justified by the circumstances which lead to its development, it is in a case where innocence finds herself assailed by slander and malignity, without being able to ascertain the exact nature of the charge, which is all the more awful from its vagueness.

That some aspersion had been cast upon her character, Lady Belvedere could not doubt; that it was sufficiently serious to be the cause of deadly strife between her friends and her slanderer, was equally evident, but whatever it might be, she had that proud consciousness of its falsehood, that could enable her to hear it with firmness, and rendered her secure of an instantaneous acquittal in the eyes of the world.

"Captain Calverley," said she, with much embarrassment, and some hesitation, "I am, as you must be well aware, in a most painful

position with respect to this affair, of which it seems I am unconsciously, and most unaccountably the cause. From what I have heard from Miss Caryl, as well as from what you have just said, I am led to believe that you are in some way involved in the quarrel, or at least, acquainted with the circumstances in which it originated. That your connexion with it must have arisen in a feeling of kindness towards me—I cannot for a moment doubt; and I therefore rely upon your candour, to unravel for me this extraordinary and distressing mystery. I entreat you to tell me the whole truth on a subject of such vital importance to my happiness and respectability, and which may perhaps require me to take more effectual steps for the vindication of my honour."

She paused, and Calverley, with a complexion varying in hue, like a piece of shot *gros de Naples*, screwed up his courage to the sticking place, and commenced a reply,

for which, as well as for the remainder of the colloquy, on both sides, we have endeavoured to perform the charitable office that Mr. Gurney is so often called upon to execute for the less practised orators of the noble house, by laying before the public, the purport of their lordships' eloquent appeals in a somewhat less disjointed form of oratory, than that in which their *infans pudor* leads them to indulge. Thus the reader's imagination will be so good as to supply the various pauses, stammerings and repetitions, which the relative circumstances of the parties rendered very excusable in point of feeling, although to the judgment of the critic, they might not be very edifying in point of eloquence.

"However embarrassing the explanation which you require may be to myself, and I need not say that it must be painfully so, on various accounts," said he, "my first duty is to obey your commands, which I shall do to

the letter; and all the more readily, inasmuch as I can most solemnly assure you, that throughout this unpleasant and very foolish affair, nothing has been said by any person which can for a moment be considered as casting any serious imputation on a character that every one must feel to be far, far above the reach of slander. But in relating to you what I know of the matter,—I have, I confess, one very serious cause of apprehension,—lest I should incur your displeasure; for I am conscious and bound to acknowledge, that the occurrence of this morning is traceable to what your ladyship may perhaps consider as my imprudence, in animadverting with much warmth on an expression which Mr. Tomkyns dropped in my hearing last night at the Opera. But, however indiscreet my interference may have been, it was prompted by feelings which, although I may not avow, I shall never cease to cherish,—and even at the risk of your displeasure, I cannot help saying, that my

chief cause of regret is in the reflection that another has stepped in to deprive me of that to which I was justly entitled, and superseded me in an office, in the exercise of which, I would willingly have sacrificed my life."

The latter part of this *tirade* was delivered with a degree of energy that strongly contrasted with the embarrassment that marked its commencement. But Lady Belvedere did not appear *very* much offended by his frankness, or very indignant at the indiscretion to which he alluded. She contented herself with replying,

"You ought rather to congratulate yourself that the rashness of others has, perhaps, saved you from a feeling of self-reproach that would have followed you to your grave, had you taken the life of a fellow-creature. Believe me, I require no such proof of your sentiments towards me, and could have very willingly dispensed with the championship of Lord Belvedere, whose well-meant zeal has,

I fear, been more injurious than useful, by the publicity which an affair of this sort is sure to obtain. But you have not answered my question; to which I can now have no longer any hesitation in requiring a distinct reply."

It is said that Love is blind; and, I believe, the same attribute has been sometimes ascribed to Justice. So far there may be a species of resemblance between them. But although justice, morally speaking, may be said to be *lovely*, love, we are sorry to say, is seldom *just;* and, perhaps, a stronger instance of the partiality with which that blind deity conducts himself could scarcely be adduced, than the fact that Lady Belvedere was disposed to throw upon his lordship the whole blame of an affair, the *éclat* of which was mainly attributable to Calverley, whose rash *sortie* in defence of her character she not only viewed with indulgence, but reflected on with satisfaction; while the

interference of Lord Belvedere, which was much more authorized by the circumstances under which it had taken place, seemed to her a rather gratuitous piece of officiousness on his part, and more deserving of censure than applause.

But although Love is blind, according to the best authorities, he is, in many cases, endowed with a faculty which, if it be not clear-sightedness, as that would be a paradox, is very similar in its nature and results. Thus in the midst of all his agitation and embarrassment, our hero did not fail to make sundry reflections on what had fallen from her ladyship, that perfectly coincided with the view of the question which we have just stated, and afforded him a degree of gratification almost equal to wha the would have felt, had he been so fortunate as to lodge a pistol-ball under the fifth rib of Mr. Bubb Tomkyns, instead of leaving that convincing mode of argument to be brought into play by my Lord Belvedere.

He therefore proceeded, with greatly increased confidence, to relate the substance of what had passed at the Opera between himself and Mr. Tomkyns, without thinking it necessary to particularize any of that gentleman's ingenious hypotheses concerning her ladyship's origin; as, however offensive they were to the feelings of our hero, they cast no personal imputation, and could not therefore have been alleged as a reasonable pretext for remonstrance. Moreover, it was a branch of the subject that Calverley was not very anxious to approach, not feeling quite certain as to the relative proportions of truth and falsehood, in the various conjectures which Tomkyns had either originated or retailed.

The relief to Lady Belvedere's mind was unspeakable, on finding the subject-matter of accusation reduced to a comparatively trifling charge, the offence in question being of too universal practice to carry with it any very serious share of public reprobation. And as

her own conscience acquitted her wholly of any intentional indulgence therein, she could very well afford to forgive her accuser.

Calverley's omission of the genealogical, or biographical part of the question, had not escaped her notice; but she judged it better to pass it over in silence, for reasons which we do not think proper to develop here, although they may perhaps be explained to the reader in the farther progress of this narrative.

"Well," said she with a smile, "I will not say that your conduct was remarkable for prudence;—but I should be very ungrateful if I were not to acknowledge the sense I entertain of your chivalrous behaviour. I am certainly not conscious of laying myself open to the charge which Mr. Tomkyns has brought against me; nor can I conceive what could induce him to make so ungallant an attack on my character,—at a moment when we had just met with every appearance of cordiality of which the nature of our acquaintance admits.

But, poor man! he has paid dearly for his unaccountable indiscretion, to give it no harsher name, and I am sure I forgive him from my heart."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the servant.

"Lord Belvedere is below, my lady, and wishes to know if your ladyship will see him this morning."

"Certainly; Brewster—Did not the porter tell his lordship that I was at home?"

"Yes, my lady; but his lordship would not walk up until I made the enquiry."

"Shew him up immediately."

Calverley rose to depart;—but Lady Belvedere, who had turned very pale at the announcement of his lordship, said with considerable embarrassment:

"Stay, I would rather you did not go—just yet; for various reasons—I do not wish,—that is—this interview is rather embarrassing

to me—after what has happened—and the presence of a third person——"

Brewster now re-appeared, ushering in his lordship, who entered with an affected air of humility and hesitation, which ill-concealed the triumphant feelings of his heart. He was dressed with his usual *recherche*, and appeared in excellent preservation, although he wore his right arm most becomingly in a sling, and a longitudinal slash from the shoulder to the wrist, in his right sleeve, tied up at proper intervals by bows of black ribbon, afforded some ground for believing that he had accurately anticipated the result of the meeting, and provided himself accordingly. Had Lord Belvedere been a Scotchman, this manifestation of the spirit of prophecy in his *toilette* arrangements, would have been easily accounted for. But as the gift of second-sight has never yet, as far as we are aware, been extended to any member of the Irish peerage, we may as

well acknowledge that his lordship's wardrobe was always supplied with one or two *invalided* coats, ready to be called into active service, in the event of any such casualty, as that which had just occurred; which garments, if report did not belie him, were occasionally employed to enlist the sympathy of the fair sex in his favour, by giving delusive effect to certain problematical fractures, imaginary bruises, or supposititious sprains!

In the present instance, however, it is but justice to the noble lord, to say, that he had a pretext for the adoption of this interesting style of costume, his adversary's ball having positively injured his arm so severely, that the surgical friend whose *accidental* presence on the ground after the affair, was so opportune, had judged it expedient to apply on the affected part, a circular piece of black court plaister, of the circumference of one shilling sterling, of the current coin of this realm.

"*Salut! belle cousine!*" exclaimed the hero, with a profound salam; "I scarcely know whether I appear before your foot-stool as a culprit who has incurred your ire, by his presumption,—or as a faithful vassal, whose honourable scars, won in the cause of his liege lady, entitle him to the rich reward of a smile from her fair lips. But I beg pardon," continued he, on seeing Calverley, "perhaps I disturb you;" and his countenance assumed an expression which was any thing but friendly towards our hero.

"Not at all, my lord;" answered Lady Belvedere, somewhat coldly, "Captain Calverley has been giving me some very interesting information concerning this unpleasant affair, in which I am sorry to perceive, your lordship has been a sufferer."

"In such a cause—lady fair, *suffering* is out of the question; the slight scratch which I received in your ladyship's defence, I am

proud to bear as the glorious badge of my servitude."

"I suppose," said Lady Belvedere, smiling, but evidently a little annoyed at the presuming flippancy of his tone, "I am bound to excuse the hyperbolical language of chivalry, in favour of the deeds of arms, in which so much of its genuine spirit has been displayed. But in truth, Lord Belvedere, I am ill-prepared to carry on the contest of *persiflage*, on a subject of such painful interest; I trust you can give me the latest accounts of Mr. Tomkyns; whose wound Captain Calverley assures me, is not considered dangerous."

"Your ladyship is happy in having such accurate sources of information," said Belvedere, with a sneer; "and Captain Calverley is certainly very obliging to have investigated so thoroughly for your satisfaction, an affair, in which, if he have any connexion with it at all, he did not feel called upon to take a principal part."

The blood rushed to Calverley's cheeks, at the insinuation implied in Lord Belvedere's remark, and it was with difficulty, he mastered his indignation sufficiently to reply, with a degree of calmness, and in a tone bordering on contempt,

"It is probable, my lord, that my connexion with the affair might have been as direct, and my interference to the full as effectual as your lordship's, had it not been for the very unusual, and somewhat unaccountable manner, in which my claims as principal were superseded."

"Oh! you mistake me entirely," said his lordship. "No blame could possibly attach to you, for leaving the matter in the hands of those who had a *right* to act on the occasion."

"As a friend of Lady Belvedere's," answered our hero, with increasing warmth, "I presume I had a *right* to resent any observation which I might consider derogatory to the

respect which the character of her ladyship demands; and I am yet to learn upon what other plea your lordship's interference can be defended. So far I believe we are on a perfect equality; but I must beg leave to observe *en passant*, that I am not very ready, to admit the right of any third person to animadvert on my conduct in the affair."

"Come, come, gentlemen!" said Lady Belvedere, who began to be somewhat alarmed at the tone of the conversation; "this sort of discussion is useless, and worse than useless. I feel grateful to you both, for the promptitude with which you have come forward as my champions; nor will I stop to enquire whether a little more prudent consideration might not have enabled you to avoid the extreme measure which you both intended to pursue, and which Lord Belvedere has carried into execution. But I must solemnly protest against these recriminatory observations; and if my decided wishes are held in any degree of re-

spect by either of you, you will prove to me, by taking each other cordially by the hand, that you are willing to sacrifice the spirit of animosity which you have exhibited, to feelings of a more creditable nature. What, gentlemen!" continued she, with increasing alarm, and greater vehemence, on perceiving that neither party exhibited any disposition to obey her commands;—"Is it not enough that my name should be bandied about from mouth to mouth, in connexion with an affair of this sort;—that it should have been made the subject of idle gossip to the whole town? Before I can be secure that *one* life has not been sacrificed in this distressing and unaccountable contest, am I to be threatened with the prospect of another quarrel,—to serve as a pretext for a second violation of the laws of God and man! and this without a shadow of cause for dispute! My Lord Belvedere—Captain Calverley,—I intreat—"

"Nay, nay! *belle cousine!*" said his lord-

ship, who, although perfectly *game*, had no abstract love of fighting, and was justly of opinion, that his morning's sport had supplied him with a stock of glory, upon which his heroic reputation could afford to subsist for some time longer: "you are needlessly apprehensive, as far as my intentions are concerned. It is certainly not my wish to quarrel with Captain Calverley; and, as it was not my purpose to offend him, I trust he will not insist upon quarrelling with me. I regret to say, that the results of the little *échauffourée* of this morning make it impossible for me to offer him my *right* hand, but if he will be content with the left, it is cordially at his service."

So saying, he held out his hand to our hero, who was, of course bound, in common civility, to take it, which he did, observing that,

"As his lordship disclaimed any intention

of giving him offence, he could have no hesitation in meeting his wishes for the establishment of a better understanding between them."

To do both gentlemen justice, the ceremony was performed with as good a grace on both sides as could reasonably be expected; although we much fear that, in accordance with the most approved principles of diplomacy, the *volto sciolto* was very decidedly at variance with the *pensieri stretti*.

The announcement that Lady Belvedere's carriage was at the door, afforded a convenient pretext for departure, of which the visitors were well disposed to avail themselves, as the social atmosphere does not easily subside into the calm of ordinary conversation, after the species of *bourrasque* which had just occurred.

As Calverley reached the door, on his way out, he perceived a person just in the act of

walking away from it, after delivering a note to the porter. It was but a glimpse; but that glimpse was sufficient to satisfy him of the individual's identity. It was our Oriental *inconnu*.

CHAPTER IX.

We sincerely trust the reader is as anxious to know as we are pre-determined not to tell him, the subject of the communication which our friend, the "mysterious stranger," was evidently making to Lady Belvedere; in which case he must exercise the same christian virtue which the circumstances of the affair prescribed to Calverley, whose curiosity was roused to a very uncomfortable degree of excitement, not unmixed with displeasure, at what he had just observed. Indeed, to say the

truth, he was in that conveniently pugnacious frame of mind, when a man is ready to quarrel with any thing or any body that may afford him an opportunity; and the organ of combativeness, called into active play by the events of the preceding evening, having been baulked of its legitimate object, was, at the moment, in so extraordinary and alarming a state of development, that he felt it tingling through his right arm down to the tips of his fingers, and extending to the very ferule of his *bamboo*.

But, alas! we are all the slaves of circumstances; reform, remodel, regenerate us as you will. The "march of mind" has taken to seven league boots, and the schoolmaster "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and yet the boasted free agency of man is a chimera; he is held in fast bondage by the trammels of civilization! Had Calverley indeed been a denizen of Connemara, and an *habitué* of Ballinasloe Fair, there is

little doubt but that in those classic regions he would have laid about him with an energy and *gusto* that would have inflicted many a broken head, and won many a golden opinion amongst the heroes of the shilelah. But, alas! there is no precedent for a gentleman of ancient descent, a captain in His Majesty's forces, an aid-de-camp to the Governor of Madras, and a member of the J. U. S. Club, taking off his *Nugee*, and dragging it after him in defiance by the sleeve, down Bond Street, on a Sunday afternoon in the month of August; so poor Harry was fain to repress the insurrectionary movements of his "*splendid bile*," and walk quietly home to his ultra-Marylebone lodgings, there to make his toilet for a six o'clock dinner, at the house of his military superior, Major-General Sir Sampson Jellico, K.C.B.

This engagement was important; it was to be a species of inauguration banquet to the newly appointed aid-de-camp, and the occasion of his introduction to the fascinating

family of his chief, the attractions of which his friend Lumley had painted in such glowing colours; and, at any other time, Calverley would have experienced an awful feeling of curiosity as to the truth of his report. But the events of the last twenty-four hours had turned the current of his thoughts into a direction far remote from the Oriental and social delights that opened on his view, as connected with his recent appointment. It was enough for him to know that he was destined to undergo a long, perhaps, an eternal separation from the object of his affections; that after having most unfortunately, and, as it appeared to him now, most culpably, missed the opportunity of shooting or being shot in her defence, he was about to leave her surrounded by adorers, and especially obnoxious to the addresses of the formidable individual who had anticipated him in his heroic intentions.

In the midst of these overwhelming anxieties, of what importance to him were the manners, temper, or appearance of the female Jellicos? What did it matter whether Lumley's family sketches were portrait or caricature, legitimate criticism, or acrimonious satire? Alas, nothing! "Man delighted him not, nor woman either;" and he felt his heart equally secure from the attractions of the junior damsel (with whom, as aid-de-camp, it might be his duty to fall in love) were she to prove fair as a Houri, or swarthy as an Ethiop.

It was singular enough, that in the midst of all these reflections, so symptomatic of exclusive devotion in one quarter, and of perfect apathy with respect to the other, he caught himself debating the question of a white or black neckcloth (he was in mourning) with an accurate scrutiny of their comparative claims, on the score of *becomingness*, that would have done no discredit to his early days of dandyism,

and would have been peculiarly flattering to those for whose benefit the question had been raised:—so much for indifference!

The fact is, that disguise it as we may, the spirit of coquetry is very nearly as active amongst us "lords of the creation," as amongst those whom we compassionately designate as the "weaker sex," which phrase, however correct it may be in a physical sense, is by no means so generally true with respect to moral or intellectual qualities, as our vanity would lead us to believe.

There is no man, no unmarried man at least, under a certain age,—say five-and-forty,—who really feels perfect indifference as to the impression which his appearance and *abord* are calculated to produce upon any unmarried lady—under a certain age:—and here—for obvious reasons, we shall not attempt to define the period,—to whom he is about to undergo a premeditated introduction.—It is not that we absolutely wish to turn her head, poor soul!

so often to philosophize, we shall be late for dinner.—

At the appointed hour Calverley proceeded to Gloucester Place, and was ushered into a room where the first object that caught his eye was an immense and shapeless mass of amber-coloured satin, which, on the announcement of his name, put itself in motion, and slowly separating from the ottoman over which it had been spread, rose gradually up to a perpendicular height, commensurate with its vast circumference, and lateral expansion.

From the opposite side of the chimney-piece hobbled forward the illustrious Jellico himself, who greeted our hero with a degree of cordiality not unmixed with condescension, and presented him to the aforesaid amber mountain, whom he introduced as Lady Jellico. The "*Begum*" assumed a most *princessly* aspect (the word is Byronian) and executed a smile admirably calculated to display two rows of teeth, which in point of length and whiteness,

of very yellow shoulders, and no inconsiderable expanse of back, which might have been more judiciously left to the imagination—Her reception of Calverley was decidedly supercilious, she being of opinion, that the individual whom, in her suburban French, she called an *eddy-cong*, was always to be kept at a distance, until he had shewn that he knew how to behave himself. Moreover, she was at the moment a good deal engrossed by the tender assiduities of a certain gaunt, hard featured, sandy-haired, and red-fisted highlander, heir apparent to a Scots peerage, and several thousand acres of "moor and mountain," highly interesting to a geologist with a strong arm and a sharp pick-axe, and eminently adapted for the grazing of a certain class of quadrupeds, who in their gastronomical predilections, are known to be the least fastidious of all the graminivorous tribes.

As the broad lands of Drumcracklin, were however more remarkable for territorial ex-

tent, than fiscal availability, the Honourable Kenneth Archibald Cosmo Gordon Cockerlony was, as in duty bound, on the look-out for *the* heiress to whom, all things considered, he was so justly entitled. At the close of an unsuccessful London campaign, during which he had three several times ascertained that "stout heart does not always win fair lady," especially when the lady is rich as well as fair, he was debating with himself, whether he would reserve his forces and postpone his operations till the shooting season; for the profitable employment of which, he had every chance which a certainty of Woburn —a fair prospect of Holkham, and a remote *vista* of Alnwick could afford him; or with a prudent estimate of the present and the certain,—as contrasted with the future and the contingent, *sit down* before, and proceed regularly to invest *Fort Jellico*, which seemed very much disposed to surrender at discretion.

A Mr. and Mrs. Jermyn,—our friend Sir Cornelius O'Sullivan, a Mr. Dubster, a ministerial M. P. *tirant sur le radical* (*the* bill had just passed) and Fitzroy Lumley, now arrived in rapid succession; and after the lapse of about a quarter of an hour, during which Sir Sampson entertained the company with a very learned dissertation on the nature, habits, and manners of the *adjutant*, not the military functionary, but the gigantic bird so called,—he seemed to grow a little impatient, and taking out his watch, observed;

"Vesey is late to day; but that is no reason the dinner should be spoiled—Lady Jellico, my love, may I trouble you to ring—I never wait beyond a quarter of an hour for anybody—especially a bachelor; if people choose to lose their dinner, that is *their* look-out;—to be sure it would not be of so much consequence, if everybody could do what I did at *Foolipatam*, on the day when I suppressed the insur-

ment, in consequence of their having imposed a tax upon rice, and published an edict against *suttees*, of course under the advice of the British resident, who being a few hundred miles up the country for his health, I, as senior military officer, was commandant *pro tempore*, and *Chargé d'Affaires*. Well, sir, I was lying full stretch on my sofa—in a light morning gown and slippers, half dozing over a novel or something of the sort, and two of my people hard at it with their *punkahs;* when in rushed the chief *havildar* of my company, with a face as long as my arm, and eyes starting from their sockets; 'What's the matter? says I.' 'Oh *Burrah Saib! Burrah Saib!*' says he—but it's no use giving you his jargon. He told me, that the whole town was up in arms, and marching on the palace and the barracks, headed by their *mollahs* and hallooed on by their women. 'Pooh, pooh!' says I, 'a fig for the *mollahs* and the *dollys too!* beat the *tom-tom*, and turn out the guard; we'll *suttee* them

in a jiffey.'—Well, sir—in five minutes the garrison was under arms, and we were marching down on the rebels, as hard as we could pelt—By the Lord, Sir Cornelius, you never saw a finer charge with fixed bayonets in your life;—we were not above a hundred and fifty altogether—the insurgents about five thousand, as near as I could calculate, armed with every sort of weapon, from a scymitar, down to a bodkin, and all sorts of kitchen utensils, by way of projectiles. Well, sir—down we rushed—double quick time. Egad! sir!—they stood their ground, and fought like devils—men, women, and children—and when my second in command, poor Mac Murdo of the Bombay Engineers—he was afterwards killed in the Burmese War,—was knocked down and had his head laid open by a fling of a tin saucepan, or some cursed machine of the kind—by Jove, sir—my troops began to waver.—Well, I saw there was no time to be lost, so giving my fellows two or three hearty

d——ns in Hindostanee, by way of encouragement,—I sprang forward, and made a *grab* at the beard of the chief *mollah*—it was as long as my arm—and before he had time to cry quarter, with one stroke of my sabre, I dispatched my Hindoo hero with all the dexterity of a Turkish executioner. This turned the fortune of the day; the whole gang set up a howl that might have been heard at St. Helena,—and whisking to the right-about, they all took to their heels, every man jack!—Well, sir, you may imagine we followed up the pursuit pretty closely, and, egad! if they didn't run like so many lamplighters, it was not for want of being prodded from behind, ha! ha! ha!—We left about five hundred on the field,—and took about as many prisoners.—Not a bad afternoon's work, I think, in a sultry climate!"

"Pretty well, for a start!" whispered Lumley to our hero,—but I told you what to expect."

"Well, Sir Sampson," said Sir Cornelius, "it was unquestionably a very gallant affair, and a mighty edifying transition from Sardanapalus to Julius Cæsar. But, my dear sir! what has all this to do with being late for dinner?"

"Why, general, that is what I was going to tell you. You must know, I was engaged to dine with his highness the rajah; and this little business of the insurrection retarded my toilet a good deal; more especially as I had received a slight scratch in the shoulder, from an amazon of a water-carrier, who was laying about her most vigorously, with a sort of toasting-fork, and harpooning right and left like a Greenland whaler. Well, sir, the short and the long of the matter is, that I arrived in the banqueting-room, half an hour after his highness's usual dinner-time. I found the rajah looking as black as a thunder-cloud, and very much disposed to resent my unpunctuality,—knowing nothing of the cause;

for he had slept through the whole afternoon, in spite of the row under his balcony, and it wasn't considered *étiquette* to give him any information, unless he condescended to make some inquiry. Accordingly, he had sat down to dinner, and dispatched the first course, and great part of the second, before I made my appearance. So after I had saluted, and all that — 'Hollo!' says I, 'am I to be *minus* my dinner?' 'Burrah saib!' says the *moonshee*,—for the rajah was an indifferent hand at English, and my knowledge of Hindostanee, was limited to a few necessary oaths; so we usually conversed through an interpreter. 'Burrah saib,' says the *moonshee*, 'his highness wait for nobody—no come—no dine. 'Your servant,' says I,—'but as I am come, I *will* dine, or I'll know why. His highness has had his fling; and, if you please, we'll *encore* the performance. I've been fighting like Hyder Ally Khan, the whole afternoon,' says I, 'and, by jingo! I won't stand any non-

sense. So master *moonshee,* you may settle it as you please with the rajah, but if you don't instantly direct those mahogany devils of yours to bring back what remains of the first course, — by Bramah and Juggernaut!' says I, 'I'll bring his excellency the governor-general about your ears, in no time! And we'll soon see who's master here, if there's justice in Leadenhall-street! — so make money of that! master moonshee!' — Egad, sir, I had them all as quiet as so many lambs, immediately. The moonshee explained the matter to the rajah; his highness apologized to me—the dinner was brought back;— and we made a night of it. His highness got as drunk as a fiddler—I wasn't particularly sober myself—and we were the best of friends in the world ever after."

Here the entrance of the servant to announce dinner, saved the party from the immediate infliction of any more traits of Anglo-Indian heroism, and they proceeded to the

dining-room, where, after the general *shuffle* which takes place, before any body begins to *cut*, our hero found himself seated between Mr. Dubster and Mrs. Jermyn, the chair opposite to him being left vacant, by the delay of the guest whose absence had been already remarked. Mrs. Jermyn was young and pretty,—and by no means indisposed to devote a certain share of her attention to Calverley, had the historical and military reminiscences of Sir Sampson allowed of her abstracting herself for any length of time from the charms of his conversation. But the worthy K. C. B. who found his impressions of the past re-inforced by his anticipations of the future,—and who was famous for a spirit of conversational monopoly, which he could no where so safely or uninterruptedly display as at his own house,—was, as the Scotch say, "neither to bind nor to hold," and accordingly, kept possession of the ground, marching and counter-marching,—*defiling*, debouching

and deploying; carrying redoubts, storming forts, and sacking towns, in every direction. At length, Mrs. Jermyn, availing herself of a pause in the garrulity of her neighbour, occasioned by the approach of a *curry*, which had great charms for his oriental palate, being compounded after the latest receipt from Pandemonium, ventured to inquire from our hero, whether he had been at the Opera on the previous evening.

For so common-place a subject, this was the most embarrassing query that could have been addressed to him. He, of course, however, answered in the affirmative, observing that he had only remained a short time in the theatre, owing to the excessive heat.

"Oh, then," said Mrs. Jermyn; "you did not witness the *fracas* in the round-room. I am told there was something little short of a boxing-match between two gentlemen,—or persons that had the appearance of gentlemen: and at the University Club, Mr. Jer-

myn heard that there had been a duel this morning; which, they say, resulted from the same affair. I forget the names; but I think one of them was a Captain Calvert, or Clavering, or some such name."

"Captain Calverley! said Sir Cornelius O'Sullivan, from the top of the table—"a glass of wine?"

Mrs. Jermyn's fork dropped from her hand, and she remained transfixed with horror and amazement, when she heard the apostrophe of the general, and saw it duly acknowledged by our hero. But Sir Sampson, who paid but little attention to the adventures of other people, except as far as they refreshed his memory, or prompted his imagination concerning his own,—having merely stopped to bait,—remounted his *cheval-de-bataille*, and prepared to set off on a new expedition.

"Talking of duels," said he to Mrs. Jermyn, "that reminds me—did you ever hear of old Macsweeney, who was adjutant-general at Vel-

lore—? No;—well, do you know, he went out with me once, because he could not make me believe that he had seen anchovies growing on trees in Italy—"

From the full perpetration of that flagrant act of literary larceny, the appropriation of an undoubted *Josephus*, Sir Sampson was rescued by the entrance of the gentleman for whom they had *not* been waiting, who glided into the vacant chair, like the ghost of Banquo. But we question whether Macbeth himself was much more surprised by the sudden appearance of his friend with the "gory locks," than was our hero, when, on raising his eyes, to examine the new arrival, he found himself confronted by the "mysterious" and inevitable stranger.

"Why, Vesey!" said Sir Sampson, forgetting adjutant-general Macsweeney, and Joe Miller's *capers*,—"you are a day after the fair—you don't call this military time?"

"I believe I made a mistake in the hour," said Vesey, "for which I have to apologize."

"Well, well! you will be the sufferer, I am afraid—but apologies are out of the question, as you see we have not waited. 'No come, no dine,' as the *moonshee*, said to me. Ha! ha! ha!—You remember that story, Vesey? eh?"

"Why, yes!" said Vesey, with a smile that was perfectly intelligible to the rest of the company: "I think I have heard it once or twice, Sir Sampson."

"We are greatly indebted to you, sir, for that acknowledgment," said Lumley, *sotto voce*, to his new neighbour; "for we are only just recovering from its effects, and are hardly prepared for the repetition of so violent a measure. The carnage was dreadful; and, you know, Sir Sampson is a long time burying his dead."

"What is that scapegrace nephew of mine

saying to you, Vesey?" enquired Sir Sampson. "The dog is quizzing me, I see by his face! ha! ha! ha! I tell you what, Master Fitzroy, I wish I could inveigle you out to Madras with me on my staff, and, by the Lord! I'd teach you to laugh at what I say, and disbelieve what I think proper to tell you."

"My dear sir," said Lumley, "there is no necessity for so troublesome a course of tuition. The accomplishment you speak of may be acquired without stirring from London. But your menaces must be rather alarming to my poor friend Calverley, whose head will be fairly in the lion's mouth by the time he reaches Madras."

"Oh, my dear Lumley," said our hero, laughing, "you need be under no apprehension on my account. I have no doubt Sir Sampson's justice is tempered with mercy, and I shall not incur his displeasure by any such insubordinate conduct. It is, I believe,

contrary to the articles of war, not to place the most implicit reliance on the statements of a military superior."

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed Sir Cornelius; "stick to that, my dear boy! A most salutary maxim for military men, upon my honour! It would be a great pity, and a great shame, entirely, if a game bird who, by dint of hard fighting, has achieved a snug little eminence of his own, should not be allowed to crow as he pleases, and flap his wings to his heart's content, without having his voice criticised by the bantams around him. Eh! Sir Sampson?"

This observation produced a general laugh, in which Sir Sampson joined with as good a grace as he could assume, although somewhat tenacious of his historical credit, and proportionably intolerant of any thing approaching to a joke on the subject, unless, indeed, it proceeded from his nephew Lumley, of whose relationship he was not a little proud, partly

on account of his good looks and social powers, and partly because he was rich, highly born, and *the fashion*—at least, as much the fashion as he thought it worth his while to be; for, as he was quite independent of the world, he gave himself very little trouble to conciliate its favour; and, as it often happens, the capricious monster courted him exactly in proportion to his real or assumed contempt for the distinctions which it can bestow.

So it was, however, that Sir Sampson would bear, and even encourage, in Lumley, a degree of freedom in canvassing his apocryphal statements, and a tone of raillery in commenting upon them, which from any other person he would have resented as in the highest degree disrespectful and impertinent; and Lumley, with whom the practice of *persiflage* was one of the necessaries of life, was by no means backward to avail himself of a privilege that afforded him such ample opportunities for the use of his favourite colloquial weapon.

"Have you been to the Zoological Gardens to-day, Colonel Vesey?" enquired Miss Jellico, from the opposite side of the table.

"No!" said the colonel, "I am rather *blasé* on the subject of tigers and elephants, having so recently returned from the regions where they abound. I took a canter through the Park, however, which was tolerably full; at least it appeared so to me, who am no judge of its relative splendour. But there was a person riding there who attracted nearly as much attention as, I should think, could have been bestowed on the rarest animal of the Zoological ménagerie."

"Who could that be?" said Miss Jellico; "was it dear Rammohun Roy, or that horrid Baron Wrynecki?"

"It was the hero of this morning's duel," said Vesey, "Lord Belvedere; with his arm in a sling, and a slashed coat sleeve."

"Ah, by-the-by," said Sir Cornelius, "they were talking of that duel at the club to-day;

but although I was as inquisitive as an Old Bailey counsel, not a man of them could I get to tell me what it was all about."

"Umph!" said Mr. Dubster, "a regular Irish business—fighting about nothing at all, and nobody knows why!"

"Have you ever been in Ireland, sir?" enquired Sir Cornelius, with a slight shade of sternness in his manner, and something rather minacious in his eye.

"No, sir," answered the M.P.

"Then, sir, I beg leave to inform you," said Sir Cornelius, "that there is no part of the world where the reasons for fighting are better understood, or more accurately defined, than in Ireland; and it is well, perhaps, that my countrymen are so completely *au fait* in these matters; for you will own that the flippancy of some English gentlemen is by no means backward to afford them very legitimate opportunities for the display of their acquirements in that particular branch

of science. In the present case, however, both parties happen to be Englishmen, and your own country is, therefore, fully entitled to the benefit of your sarcasm."

"But is the cause of the duel really such a mystery?" said Mr. Jermyn, with the laudable wish to create a diversion.

"Oh, Fitz knows all about it, I dare say;" said Sir Sampson. "That Guards' Club of his is the regular scandal shop. So come, Master Lumley, open your budget."

Thus appealed to, Lumley could not avoid giving some signs of life.

"That is a palpable hit, Sir Sampson," said he, "though not in the direction you intended; for my much-libelled club has no share in the authority upon which I give you my version of the affair. I can, however, speak pretty confidently on the subject, having been an eye-and-ear-witness of the quarrel, which took place last night between Belvedere and Bubb Tomkyns. Like

most other mysteries, however, it turns out to be a secret very little worth knowing. It arose from Lord Belvedere's resenting a charge of flirtation, brought against his fair cousin, or cousin-in-law, by that very wise and discreet person, Mr. Tomkyns; the said Mr. Tomkyns having been, in my hearing, very roundly taken to task, in the Crush Room of the Opera, for a similar impertinence, by my excellent friend Calverley, *que voilà!* who, notwithstanding the demure aspect which he thinks proper to wear on the occasion, did, I am credibly informed, aspire to the honour of shooting Mr. Tomkyns himself; had not a repetition of the offence, with circumstances of aggravation, at Mrs. Alwyn's supper-t ible, obliged Lord Belvedere to anticipate his intentions, and bring the matter to a crisis, this morning, before our friend had time to take any measures on the subject."

It may perhaps be doubted how far Lumley acted with discretion in enlightening the com-

pany as to Calverley's connexion with the Belvedere and Tomkyns affair. His motives for doing so were, however, such as our hero did not fail to understand and appreciate. He now became conscious that he was "the observed of all observers;" but he was not a man to feel particularly abashed under that species of scrutiny, and he therefore remarked, with perfect self-possession, and an air of the most philosophical *impassibilité*:

"I am bound, I think, to corroborate the statement of my friend Lumley, with respect to the origin of the quarrel. As to the warlike intentions which he has done me the honour to ascribe to me," continued he, with a smile, "I presume I shall not be expected either to acknowledge or disclaim them. In her estimate of heroism, Fame, I believe, is not in the habit of taking the will for the deed; and I think Sir Cornelius will agree with me, that when a man has projected an exploit which circumstances prevent him from

carrying into execution, the less he says about it, the better."

"Well, well, my dear fellow," said Sir Cornelius, "we will not press you too hard upon that matter; but I am quite sure the ladies have heard enough to allow you *brevet* rank as a knight-errant of the purest chivalry."

"Not *unattached*," muttered Lumley, in an audible whisper; but the joke only told upon the person against whom it was directed; and the subject of the duel, which had evidently become *personal* to *one*, if not two of the company present, was, of course, dropped as if by common consent.

If we could afford time and space from the narration of events more immediately connected with the progress of our history, we should tell how, after the ladies retired, the conversation assumed a political tone; how Mr. Dubster, the honourable member for Spoutingley, uttered much radical rant, which was met, on the part of Sir Cornelius,

by a proportionate quantity of ultra-tory twaddle; how our hero and Lumley acted as moderators of the assembly, while Mr. Kenneth Archibald Cosmo Gordon Cockerlony and Sir Sampson Jellico fell asleep during the discussion; and how the latter gentleman, having recruited his strength and refreshed his powers of memory by a short nap, reassumed the ascendant, and setting at nought the momentous questions of the duration of parliament, the farther extension of the elective franchise, and the vote by ballot, bore down upon the conversation with such resistless force of tongue and lungs, and such a formidable array of oriental anecdote and warlike reminiscence, as carried every thing before them; how at each successive revolution of the decanter-planets round the gigantic punch-bowl which formed the appropriate centre to the convivial system, Sir Sampson's narrative waxed more incredible in substance, more unpronounceable

in locality, and more minute in detail. But the moment for joining the ladies had arrived; and just as he had risen, after one of his most apocryphal anecdotes, to give the signal for departure, he paused suddenly, stared wildly round, and fell on the floor. All the guests rushed simultaneously to his assistance; they raised him up—*he was dead!*

CHAPTER X.

THERE is nothing that serves more effectually to break down the barriers of formality which obstruct the intercourse of strangers in society, than a common participation in some scene of painful and unlooked-for excitement, such as that we have recorded at the close of the last chapter. The aspect of death, even in the ordinary course of nature or disease, and attended by every circumstance of preparation, is in itself calculated to produce in those who witness its approach, a simulta-

neous feeling of sympathy that tends to obliterate the forms and level the factitious distinctions of the world. But when, unthought of—unannounced,—it makes its appearance in the hour of festivity, presenting in the sudden horror and desolation by which it is accompanied, a ghastly contrast to the heedless merriment of the preceding moment, the whole fabric of ceremony and conventional observance is for the time swept away; and under the influence of so solemn and impressive a warning, the bond of our common humanity is at once felt and acknowledged.

Thus it was, that after the painful scene of mortality and domestic affliction which he had just witnessed, the farther details of which we shall spare the reader, as we love not to dwell unnecessarily on themes of gloom and distress, our hero found himself walking slowly clubwards, in earnest and almost confidential conversation with Colonel Vesey, with whom he had had no intercourse during the convivial

part of the evening, and towards whom he had experienced an instinctive feeling of dislike, which he could much more easily account for than justify.

This groundless and somewhat fanciful prepossession having been overcome or forgotten, in the powerful excitement of that evening's catastrophe, Calverley had now leisure to observe and candour to acknowledge how little there was in the appearance and manners of the colonel to authorize its revival. His general air and aspect were, as we have said, aristocratic, and we might add, elegant; and the unstudied courtesy of his demeanour, at once easy and unassuming, derived additional effect from the deep, rich tones of a voice in which the Irish accent was slightly discoverable, not so much in any peculiarity of pronunciation, as in a certain modulated variety of cadence, seldom perceptible in the uniform pitch of English conversation.

"Poor Jellico!" said the colonel, "I am

sincerely grieved for him. He was an excellent fellow, with as gallant a spirit, and as kind a heart, as were ever united in the same person. I have known him long and intimately, and little did I anticipate so abrupt and melancholy a termination to our intercourse! But such is life!"

"I can imagine," said Calverley, "how deeply you must be affected by an occurrence of this nature, aggravated as it is to you by the recollection of long and intimate friendship. For even I, who am almost a stranger to the person and character of poor Sir Sampson, have felt more shocked and unmanned by the whole affair than I can well describe."

"At your age," said Vesey, "such scenes are calculated to produce on the mind a deep, or at least, a strong impression; the durability of which, however, is fortunately not equal to its strength. As we advance in life, our sensibilities are gradually blunted by the wear and tear of the world, and we are fain to de-

ceive others and perhaps ourselves, by veiling our callousness under the specious title of philosophy. Thus we assume the more credit for the triumph over our feelings, in proportion to the ease with which the victory has been achieved."

"I am afraid," said Calverley, "your own experience belies your theory; or rather I should say, you are scarcely qualified to appeal to that experience in its support. It is somewhat early for you to talk of the chilling influence of age."

"In years, perhaps," replied Vesey, "I cannot be considered very old, it is true; but upwards of four lustres passed under an Indian sun, are not to be computed by the ordinary rate of calculation. This, however, is not all—If my body has escaped the ravages of disease, and the blighting influence of an eastern climate, care and anxiety have done the work of time on my mind and heart."—

our minds to fulfil it. For instance, young as you are, I can believe that *you* are no stranger to grief,—to bodily suffering,—to disappointment,—perhaps to remorse;—for, though the expression is a strong one, who is there to whom the feeling is not more or less familiar, if he have sense enough to distinguish between right and wrong, and courage to estimate his conduct by the standard of his duties?—But," continued he, with increased earnestness of manner, and a certain solemnity of voice; "have you any conception of an anxiety that pursues you by day, and haunts you by night;—that is uninfluenced alike by change of scene, and by the lapse of years;—a grief that will not yield to reason —and which sets at nought the maxims of philosophy;—an idea ever present to your mind, whether in action or repose—in health or in sickness,—in prosperity or in adversity, —drying up the fountain of life, and poisoning the sources of enjoyment in the human

companion's dark eye, and the contraction of his brow, as he cast a scrutinizing glance towards our hero, on his uttering these latter words, he would have been startled. But the expression, and the idea which had called it up, passed rapidly away, when Vesey observed the unconscious look of Calverley, as the light fell strongly upon his countenance from one of the street lamps, under which they were passing.

"Well," said he, "your notions on the subject are natural, and, I am aware, generally borne out by experience. I sincerely trust that you may never have personal grounds for coming to a different conclusion. The longer we can retain the illusions of youth, the better."

They had now arrived at the spot where their routes branched off, and having taken leave of each other, with an appearance and feeling of cordiality, rather unusual upon so short an acquaintance, they separated.

Various and conflicting were the reflections of our hero, as he slowly and thoughtfully continued his course towards the club. The event of that evening, so painfully interesting to all who had witnessed it, was to him matter of serious importance, deeply affecting his immediate prospects, and perhaps, likely to influence in no slight degree his ultimate destiny in life.

The loss of his appointment as aid-de-camp to the governor of Madras, in all probability an inevitable consequence of the death of Sir Sampson, was, mundanely speaking, if not a misfortune, at least a *contrariété*, that in most cases would have called for the exercise of philosophy:—that inestimable virtue, of which every one imagines himself to possess a valuable stock, as long as he has no occasion to apply it to practical purposes; but which, the moment he has recourse to it for assistance, is found to have disappeared, like the deceitful coin of the magician in the Arabian

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hopes. The idea of quitting England at such a moment, seemed to him a betrayal of his own cause, which scarcely any consideration could render imperative;—an exertion of moral courage, that at best, was but the cowardice of the heart.

It was therefore with a feeling little removed from satisfaction, that he found himself thus relieved from the disagreeable necessity of abandoning the field, at the very moment when he had begun to believe in the possibility of victory; and it may be safely asserted that few people who have been gratified by the apparent attainment of their wishes, ever felt a greater degree of christian resignation on witnessing the sudden overthrow of the structure which they had given themselves so much trouble to raise.

We think the reader, who has any experience of the usual progress of affairs in this world, will acknowledge, that the life of man rarely exhibits in the person of one

individual, two such instances of good fortune, within the short space of a fortnight; in the first place, he had, without the trouble of solicitation, obtained exactly the species of appointment which he had sought; and, in the second place, he was so fortunate as to get rid of it without any blame to himself, within four-and-twenty hours after he had begun to look upon it as a grievance rather than an advantage. But we will now leave him, to ruminate on the past, the present, and the future, with that alternation of complacency and regret, which his position and feelings were calculated to produce; and without any apology to the reader for the shortness of a chapter, which we are bound to confess, tends very little to the development of our history, we shall proceed to the recital of matters, if not more interesting, at least, more obviously conducive to the legitimate object of our labours.

CHAPTER XI.

Amongst the few female friends of her childhood and early youth, to whom Lady Belvedere could look for advice and assistance in any case of difficulty, there was one on whose judgment she had the greatest reliance, and of whose affectionate regard she could entertain no doubt. Mrs. Norcliffe was a widow of good fortune and highly respectable connexions, whose period of life and long intimacy with Mrs. Wilmot, almost qualified her to assume a sort of maternal authority over our heroine, whom she had known and

loved from her infancy. But caring little for society, in the extended sense of that word which its common application implies, and too much attached to her own habits and independence of action to assume the gratuitous responsibility of another's guidance, she had firmly, though gratefully, declined the proposal which our heroine had made to her on Lord Belvedere's death to take up her residence in Hill Street, and thus, affording to Lady Belvedere her countenance and support in the embarrassments of her isolated position, share in the *éclat* and splendour with which it was attended.

"I am," said she, "my dear Caroline, too old for a companion, and too lazy for a duenna. I have been too long mistress of my own house, to be content with a divided, much less a subordinate authority. My habits of life are unsuited to those of the young and the gay; my taste for locomotion is satisfied by my daily drive round

the outward ring of the Regent's Park; my notions of enjoyment comprise little more than my books, my easy-chair, and my fireside; my ideas of dissipation are confined to an occasional rubber with a few quiet elderly friends in an evening; and I am never satisfied to be out of bed after twelve at night. My society, my advice, my sympathy, are yours, as often as you require them; but, believe me, it is better for us both that we should retain our social individuality."

But although Mrs. Norcliffe had refused to accept the office of chaperon *en titre*, in her private capacity, she was always happy to afford to Lady Belvedere the benefit of her experience; and to her accordingly our heroine had frequent recourse, whenever she felt doubtful as to the line of conduct which she ought to pursue. In the ordinary transactions of society, indeed, the good taste, good feeling, and delicate tact of Lady Belvedere, made her quite independent of

all other counsellors, and enabled her to perform her part with a grace and propriety that could scarcely be surpassed. But whatever may be the advantages of natural disposition and careful education, the deficiency of experience must always render the very young liable to a thousand imprudences, which they can only avoid by availing themselves of that knowledge which time has enabled others to store up for the benefit of their friends,—for, *malheureusement*, it is generally too late for their own advantage.

Mrs. Norcliffe was well qualified to fulfil the functions of occasional Mentor. Her masculine understanding, knowledge of the world, and freedom from the illusions of youth, lent to her counsels a weight of authority in the eyes of Lady Belvedere, which was much greater than she herself could have expected or desired. Frankness, sincerity, and good-nature, not unalloyed by a certain bluntness of manner and a slight tendency to sarcasm,

were the prevailing qualities of her *commerce;* and though to some fools and coxcombs she was rather an object of fear, the sterling virtues of her character had won for her the sincere regard of all who were *really* acquainted with its worth.

It is with this "right trusty and faithful counsellor" that we shall now find Lady Belvedere closeted, on the morning after the occurrence of the events which we have just related.

"Well, my dear Lady Belvedere," said Mrs. Norcliffe, "here I am, you see, in obedience to your summons. Sorry I was not at home when you called yesterday; but I had gone up to Hampstead to an early dinner with some old friends of mine, who adhere to the primitive hour of five;—regular, matter-of-fact, John Bull-ish sort of people, who look upon late hours as one of the snares of the enemy, and abhor the use of French wines and French cookery as alike

unpatriotic and unchristian. I assure you, I have laid in a stock of antediluvian notions, that would give *you* an *attaque de nerfs*, but would dove-tail very easily with my quiet manner of living. But do tell me, what is the matter? This duel, I suppose."

"No, my dear Mrs. Norcliffe, it is not on that account that I have ventured to solicit your advice and presence. Though my name has been most provokingly connected with that affair, yet, as I certainly was guiltless of its origin, I have nothing further to say to it. My object is to submit to your penetration and experience, a most extraordinary note which I received yesterday, and concerning which, I scarcely know how to act."

"Well," said Mrs. Norcliffe, "let us see. The less you have to do with mysteries, the better."

Lady Belvedere handed the note to Mrs.

Norcliffe. It was couched in the following terms:—

"*Private.*

"*Oriental Club. Sunday, July*, 1832.

"Colonel Gerald Vesey presents his respectful compliments to Lady Belvedere, and with many apologies for what he fears must appear an impertinence on the part of a stranger, ventures to solicit the honour of an interview, at her ladyship's perfect convenience.

"Colonel Vesey is well aware that Lady Belvedere will consider this request unreasonable, and the whole proceeding extraordinary; and he begs to assure her ladyship, that he would have taken some other method of communicating with her on the *very important* subject, in which it originates, were his communication of a nature to be made by letter, or entrusted to the discretion of a third party.

"Colonel Vesey, who delivers this note in person, will call to-morrow morning for any answer with which Lady Belvedere may think proper to honour him. He most earnestly entreats that her ladyship will not lightly refuse a request, which, he trusts, the circumstances of the case will, ere long, fully justify in her eyes."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Norcliffe, after she had read the note, "what do you mean to do?"

"That is precisely the point I wish to have settled; and for that purpose, I have required the assistance of your wisdom. How should I act on so very singular an occasion?"

"Why the request is very odd—not to say very impudent; but, unless the man is mad, which is possible, I should think there must be a substantial motive for the proceeding. As it *may*, perhaps, be connected with some intelligence of interest or importance to you,

I should think you might venture to see him. It cannot be an application for pecuniary relief, dated from the Oriental Club house; that is too preposterous. The handwriting, the style, and the *fold* of the note, all indicate that it comes from a gentleman. From his name, I should imagine him to be an Irishman, and, *par parenthèse*, he is not likely to raise the character of his countrymen on the score of modesty. Fifty or sixty years ago, when people had the fear of Irish matrimonial speculations before their eyes, and heroines were hurried away from their homes by parties of armed men, with black crape on their faces, I should have advised you to take every precaution against a regular *enlèvement*; but, thank God! the days for such boisterous demonstrations of love are over,—at least in England; and, at all events, I think you may safely trust to the devoted guardianship of your household for protection against such dangers."

"Well, but," said Lady Belvedere, "if I must positively grant an audience to this mysterious applicant, I trust you will have no objection to support me by your presence, through the dangers of the interview. You know I have no secrets from you."

"Indeed, my dear Lady Bel.,—I know no such thing; but you need not blush so deeply, my dear—I am not going to be inquisitive, or to complain of your concealing anything from me which I ought to know. I am satisfied that you are as unreserved in your communications with me, as is consistent with the thirty years between our ages. You know I am by no means *exigeante* in such matters. I never catechize; but *en fait de confidences*, I take whatever comes in my way, and am satisfied to be left in ignorance of the remainder.—But to return to your correspondent; is there no means of discovering who or what he may be? Vesey!—Gerald

Vesey—umph—let me see, I suppose you have got a Peerage in the house."

"Here is the latest edition of Burke," said Lady Belvedere.

"Well, who knows but that may do something for us? *Voyons*,—'Lord de Vesci'—no, nothing to be found there. 'Glanmire—(George Gerald Vesey-Bagshawe,) Lord Glanmire and so forth—Why our friend must be somewhere in this neighbourhood.—Let us see—'This ancient family claims to be descended from'—pooh! Adam, of course, 'ennobled in the person of—Gerald Vesey, Esq.'—here we are—'who was elevated to the peerage on the 1st of October 1603,' a good way off still—but the name is there at all events.—'Heir apparent; none. Heir presumptive!'—why here is the very man, my dear—'Heir presumptive: Colonel Gerald Vesey, C. B. of the Honourable East India Company's service,—his lordship's cousin!'—

so far so good—But did you ever see this mysterious personage?"

"Not to my knowledge—nor indeed have I ever heard his name before. But it is singular enough, there is a gentleman whom I saw on Saturday at the Opera, and two or three days before at the British gallery, who stared at me in so marked a manner, as to attract the attention of Miss Caryl who was with me. Somebody, I forget who, said that he looked like an old Indian, and since I have received the note, I cannot divest myself of the idea that he is its author."

"Well, my dear Caroline," said Mrs. Norcliffe, "I must say it is as promising a commencement for a romance as you could possibly desire. But still, this is a very matter-of-fact, prosaic world, and we must take our measures accordingly."

The tête-à-tête was here interrupted by the entrance of a servant.

"The gentleman who left a note for your

ladyship yesterday, is here, my lady, and wishes to know whether there is any answer."

"*Eh bien?*" said Lady Belvedere, interrogatively to Mrs. Norcliffe.

"*Eh bien! qu'on le fasse entrer, c'est la seule chose qu'il y ait à faire.*"

"Say I am at home, and beg him to walk up; you will remain, my dear Mrs. Norcliffe," continued Lady Belvedere, when the servant had left the room.

"If I can do so without indiscretion, certainly. You know, however, a secret may be divided between two people, but there is seldom enough for three."

"Well, at all events, you will only go into the next room."

Here the door re-opened, and Brewster ushered in Colonel Vesey, who entered with a hesitating step, and an air of embarrassment very unusual in an Irishman of his rank and years.

Lady Belvedere, who had been prepared

for the discovery of his identity with the *inconnu* of the Gallery and the Opera, was accordingly little surprised at the confirmation of her conjectures, and rose to receive him with a degree of composure, grace, and dignity, that would have excited his most enthusiastic admiration, had he been himself sufficiently collected to take any very accurate observation concerning the demeanour of other people.—The agitation of Calverley, on the preceding day, had proved infectious, as we have seen; but the embarrassment of Colonel Vesey seemed to have a contrary effect on our heroine, and her courage acquired strength, in proportion as his appeared to fail him. The distinction between the two cases, is material; and we trust the penetration of the reader will have no difficulty in accounting for it upon philosophical principles.

Mrs. Norcliffe eyed the stranger with the suspicious and searching glance of one accus-

tomed to rely on her physiognomical skill, in her intercourse with the world, and who had seldom occasion to correct the first impressions thus rapidly formed. It was a maxim of hers, that the character of the book was generally discoverable from the title-page.

It should seem that the result of her survey was not on the whole unfavourable to the claims of the gallant colonel; for after having *looked through* him during half a minute, with a pair of black, inquisitive-looking eyes, that had lost little of the brilliancy, and none of the keenness of former years, she uttered a semi-audible sound, not exactly referable to any one of the eight parts of speech, but which her friends knew to be indicative of satisfaction; and began to turn over the leaves of Burke with an air of great interest, highly creditable to her ardour for genealogical research.

"I have many apologies to offer to your

ladyship," said the colonel, at length, " for intruding upon you, without the ceremony of an introduction;—but I shall trust to your indulgence, when I have had an opportunity of explaining the object of my visit."

Lady Belvedere bowed:—and the colonel, as if uncertain how he was to proceed, looked hesitatingly and enquiringly from her ladyship to Mrs. Norcliffe, and from Mrs. Norcliffe to her ladyship.

" In the note which I had the honour of addressing to you," continued he, after a pause, " I believe I mentioned that what I had to say was rather—of a—confidential nature,"—and he again looked towards Mrs. Norcliffe.

" This lady," said Lady Belvedere, replying to his look, rather than to his words, " is my nearest connexion, and my most particular friend from my childhood. I have no secrets from her—and I can rely on her discretion as upon my own. Peculiarly circum-

stanced as I am in society, and obliged, from that position, to be more than commonly circumspect in my conduct,—you will not, I am sure, be surprised that, on an occasion like the present, I should be anxious to avail myself of her countenance and support, in a proceeding which I cannot but feel to be rather *hasardé*."

"It is, I am aware, a most reasonable wish on the part of your ladyship," said the colonel; "and I am perfectly willing to acknowledge that, as a stranger, presenting myself under such singular circumstances, I had no right to expect that you would concede even so much to my request.—But I regret to say that considerations, the force of which you would easily appreciate, were I at liberty to explain them, oblige me to confine my communications, to your ladyship alone;—at least in the present stage of the affair.—My profession, my country, and my name," continued he, with a slight degree of pride in his

manner, "will, I trust, be sufficient security that the object of my visit is not such as a lady should fear to learn, or a gentleman need disavow."

"Lady Belvedere, my dear," said Mrs. Norcliffe, "as I am quite satisfied that you may, without any alarming departure from the *bienséances* of your position, indulge Colonel Vesey with a few moments' private conversation,—and as I should be very sorry that my presence were to prevent him from explaining himself on a subject concerning which you must necessarily feel a good deal of curiosity,—I shall just walk into the library, and await your leisure."—So saying, and with a polite bow to the colonel, she passed into the next room.

Vesey was now alone with Lady Belvedere; but, anxious as he had been to secure the interview, he seemed in no great hurry to avail himself of the opportunity that it presented, for the confidential communication

said the colonel;—" at least as far as it may be in my power to comply with them. The affair which brings me here, is of the most vital interest to me; and unless my hopes and anticipations deceive me, it may perhaps prove to be of no less importance to your ladyship. I must however acknowledge, that, as yet, I am guided only by conjecture;—and it is in order, if possible, to ascertain the accuracy of that conjecture, that I have ventured on the step which has so naturally excited your surprise.—You were probably, until yesterday, ignorant of my name and my existence; and it is only within these few days that I have been induced to believe that your ladyship might afford me some information on the subject nearest my heart,—or at least supply me with a clue that might possibly guide me to discoveries of the highest importance to me, which I had almost despaired of ever making. The extraordinary, the incredible likeness which you bear

colonel, in equal astonishment, " has never been in the possession of any other person. It was painted expressly for me, four-and-twenty years ago."

" This is most unaccountable!" said Lady Belvedere. " I cannot of course call in question the accuracy of your statement. But were it not for that assurance, I should be perfectly convinced that I now held in my hand, a miniature which has for years been in my possession, and which I left at Belvedere Abbey, about four months since."

" What, then!" exclaimed the colonel, eagerly, and with great agitation,—" your ladyship has a duplicate of this portrait?"

Lady Belvedere bowed assent.

" Then I entreat,—I conjure you," continued he with increased vehemence,—" to tell me in what manner you became possessed of it. Have you ever known—can you tell me any tidings of the—the original?"

Lady Belvedere paused, ere she made any

reply. At length, after a few moments' consideration, she said:—

"Colonel Vesey, it is impossible for me to answer your question, without referring to circumstances connected with my own history, into which, you will excuse me if I say, you have not as yet satisfied me of your right to enquire. How far the communication which you have to make, and which I have understood to be the object of your visit, may influence my view of what it is expedient for me to state, I cannot, of course, yet determine;—but, circumstanced as I am, you will at once perceive, that any explanation on my part, must follow—not precede, the statement which can alone entitle you to demand it."

"I admit it," said the colonel musingly. "I have no right to claim your ladyship's confidence, without giving some satisfactory proof that it will not be misplaced.—There are reasons,—many and powerful reasons, why

I am unwilling to communicate at once the facts which have occasioned my application to you. However—no matter!—It must be done.—But" continued he, solemnly and almost sternly, "before I reveal to you certain circumstances deeply affecting the honour of an ancient house, and the happiness of some of its members,—I must require your promise that no part of those circumstances, as communicated to you, shall be allowed to transpire; that you will not drop the slightest hint on the subject, even to those friends on whose discretion you have the most implicit reliance;—at least, until authorized by me to state what you have heard.—Will your ladyship pledge yourself to this?"

Lady Belvedere hesitated.—There was something startling in the idea of a promise of secrecy, exacted from her by a stranger,—and, as it appeared, in reference to matters which might personally concern herself. But the incident of the two miniatures was so



CHAPTER XII.

The month that ensued after the period at which we closed our last chapter, was rich in occurrences of the highest importance to the destinies of the civilized world, as well as to the progress of this narrative. That duodecimal section of the circle which the wheel of time describes in its annual revolution, was marked by the recovery and departure for the continent of the chivalrous and unfortunate Mr. Bubb Tomkyns,—by the death, at Calverley Hall, of the infant son and heir of Sir Hugh and Lady Mary Cal-

verley;—by the elopement to Gretna of Sir Sampson Jellico's only daughter and heiress with the Honourable Kenneth Archibald Cosmo Gordon Cockerlony;—and, "though last, not least," by the dissolution of the unreformed and reforming parliament!

Yes! the die was cast; the vast change effected in our legislative institutions was about to come into operation. The glories of Bletchingly and Milborne Port had faded from our view;—the sun of Gatton and Old Sarum had set for ever! Dire was the grief, and bitter the wailing over departed boroughs. Full many a bereaved patron bemoaned his fondest hopes of place or peerage engulfed in Schedule A; while his unseated and desponding representatives looked in vain around for shelter in their parliamentary destitution. True:

> "The *bill* was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest."—

But how to get chosen was the difficulty.

Full many a venerable senator, whose long and undisturbed tenure of a quasi-hereditary seat induced him to reckon upon the immobility of Theseus, — "sedet, æternumque sedebit,"—now found his parliamentary slumbers rudely disturbed by the sudden withdrawal of this cherished support.

Happy, thrice happy those whose foresight had enabled them to *hedge* in the disastrous game which had been so lately playing;—who, well skilled to note the significant phenomena of the political atmosphere, had seized the opportune moment for concession, and, by a timely and graceful sacrifice of the devoted borough, secured a dignified retreat *up-stairs* for their dislodged persons, and a coronet as the well-merited decoration of their patriot brows! But happier still the select few whom chance or favour had allowed to retain unquestioned what was so pitilessly wrested from their adversaries; being thus,

by the especial indulgence, of fortune, and a reforming ministry, enabled to reconcile the profession of patriotism with the preservation of privilege, and permanently to enjoy all the advantages of political delinquency, while claiming and receiving the homage which is due to public virtue.

Among the less harshly used victims of the Reform Bill, which ministerial justice, tempered with mercy, had consigned to Schedule B, was the ancient and respectable borough of Talkington, the patronage of which had been, for the space of of half-a-century, most impartially divided between the distinguished families of Calverley Hall and Belvedere Abbey. Accordingly, during the whole of that period, every succeeding general election had witnessed the peaceful and uncontested return of two senators, judiciously selected from among the members of these allied houses, each of which nominated

the family candidate without any interference with the appointment of the other.

The elective franchise was, in this borough, as in many others, restricted to the corporation, which consisted of twelve burgesses, whose feelings of regard and gratitude towards the two houses were always so nicely balanced, as to produce the strictest impartiality in the exercise of their political functions. Each dynasty certainly possessed important claims to the favourable consideration of the worthy and independent electors. On one side of the town lay the princely domains of the Calverleys; on the other, the broad lands of the Tyringhams, Viscounts Belvedere. Sir Hugh was Lord of the Manor, and possessed the undoubted right of shutting up the market-place, across all the avenues to which, during one day in the year, a wooden bar was regularly extended, in testimony and assertion of his seignorial rights. Lord Bel-

vedere, on the other hand, was sovereign of a water-course, which had been, by his gracious favour and permission, with every reservation of his feudal authority, directed so as to be made available for the purposes of machinery in certain manufactories, the produce of which formed the staple commodity of Talkington. Again, the corporation of the borough generally reckoned among its august fraternity some of those ingenious artificers and indefatigable purveyors who minister to our physical necessities, and with these gentlemen the custom of the two great houses was matter of too serious importance to be risked for the indulgence of a political caprice, or for the sake of abstract theories of legislation, which they had the good fortune not to understand, and the good sense not to discuss.

They felt that the system, as far as they were concerned, "worked well;" their municipal rights and corporate immunities were

duly acknowledged and protected; the little official *snuggeries*, which the public establishments of the town afforded, were regularly and impartially distributed among themselves and their kindred; and at the cheap rate of a septennial complaisance, they were too happy to secure to themselves permanent and daily advantages.

In short, a more edifying picture of primeval simplicity and political content has seldom been witnessed since the good old days of the golden age. The joint sovereigns of Talkington were usually well aware that their strength consisted in their union. To make that union effective, and that strength available, it was obviously expedient to keep as much as possible on the winning side; and, accordingly, their names were almost invariably found in the ministerial majority, in all divisions where any important principle was at stake, although they jointly and severally reserved to themselves the right of an occa-

sional refractoriness in discussions of less moment, when their opposition just served to shew their teeth, and warn a too confident minister that political volunteers are sometimes worth a little trouble in the way of conciliation, and that the *unbought* constitutional support of *independent* members, is not to be confounded with the *unpaid* fanaticism of party.

Thus, during a long succession of parliaments, the politics of Talkington were undisturbed by faction, and its movements accurately regulated by the variations of the ministerial atmosphere. The principle of reciprocity, and that judicious interchange of mutual good offices which forms the charm of social, and the bond of public life, were finely exemplified in the intercourse of the constituents with their representatives; and there is no saying how long this blissful state of things might have continued, to the edification of the world, and the satisfaction of

all parties concerned, had not the "three glorious days" frighted the civilized world from its propriety, and the continental contagion of revolution communicated itself to our more healthy shores, in the mitigated shape of "Reform."

Hitherto, as we have said, the politics of Talkington had prudently changed with every change of ministry. But the support was contingent, not unconditional; and indeed there is a point of obsequiousness beyond which the most devoted partisan will sometimes become restive. Parliamentary subordination has its limits, and with every disposition to uphold "those who have any thing to give," a man will generally require the application of some very cogent arguments before he can be persuaded to acquiesce in his own political annihilation. It is, therefore, no wonder that when the much-desired and much-dreaded bill announced to the expectant world, and the trembling electors of

Talkington, the partial extinction of that ancient and loyal borough, the sitting members, viz., Sir Hugh Calverley, Bart., and the Honourable Oswald Tyringham, uncle to the late, as well as to the present Lord Belvedere, began to feel considerable alarm for the permanency of that senatorial dignity, which, *quoad* their favourite borough, they would no longer be permitted to share, and that, under the circumstances, all mere political and party views were superseded by considerations of a more exclusively personal nature.

The former motives for acting in concert had now ceased to exist;—from allies they were likely to be transformed into rivals, and each, fully persuaded that it was chiefly expedient, to take care of himself, might have addressed the other in the words of—*not* Shakspeare, we believe, but Colley Cibber:

"Of one or both of us the hour is come."

Mr. Tyringham had, moreover, his misgivings with respect to his own tenure of the seat, should even the influence of his family remain paramount. He had been returned during the life-time, and by the interest of his nephew, the late lord, who, being one of the representative peers for Ireland, had, as a matter of course, nominated his nearest relation as the family member of the Lower House. But the present viscount, on whom the property and political influence of the Tyringhams had of course devolved, having as an Irish peer no seat in the House of Lords, would, in all probability, feel disposed to avail himself of that privilege which enables the individuals of his order to sit in the House of Commons, if elected.

Personally, therefore, Mr. Tyringham's adhesion to the government was of little consequence, beyond his single vote; and ministers, who were aware of that fact, taking no great pains to conciliate his favour, he re-

solved, as the phrase is, to "die game," and secure to himself, at least, the praise of consistency, by adhering to the "outs," and thus establishing a prospective claim on the gratitude of the unpopular party, who, should they one day return to power, would, perhaps, reward him for his desperate fidelity to an unsuccessful cause.

Far different were the hopes and the position of his colleague, Sir Hugh Calverley. His political consequence did not solely rest upon his authority with the independent electors of Talkington. If over one-half of that borough he was omnipotent, he was decidedly influential in another a few miles distant, and his authority was far from being without weight in the election for the county. His brother-in-law, Lord Enniscorthy, a member of the House of Lords, was well known to be a good deal under the control of Sir Hugh, and his lordship's *cadet*, Captain O'Reilly, had mainly owed his election for

the borough which we have just mentioned, to the exertions of the worthy baronet. In the house, Sir Hugh was a good speaker and an able debater, and justly considered by the minister as one whose intellectual as well as his numerical support was of no small importance to government.

Such being his situation and qualifications, it occurred to Sir Hugh that this momentous crisis in the history of the country might be also, in some measure, the crisis of his fate, and, if skilfully managed, assist him in obtaining what had been for years the dearest object of his ambition—a peerage!

It remains to be seen how far he calculated with precision, in reckoning upon such an exercise of the royal prerogative, which, in the present instance, might be said, heraldically speaking, to bear some analogy to the cauldron of Medea, in as far as it would convert an old baronet into a young peer. For the present, we return to our hero, on

whose future destiny the political matters which we have developed, perhaps at too great a length, bear more directly than the reader may have anticipated.

About a month had elapsed since the sudden death of Sir Sampson Jellico had effected such a material change in the prospects of poor Calverley; but, perhaps, the resignation with which he had first borne his disappointment (if such it might be called), had rather diminished than increased in the interval. Whether this were not in some degree attributable to the fact that, during that time, he had enjoyed no opportunity of seeing Lady Belvedere, except in public, and that he had twice observed the formidable Colonel Vesey issuing forth from her door in Hill Street, and *once* seen him in attendance upon her opera-box, we do not take upon ourselves to say; certain it is, that his spirits, originally raised by the occurrence which his friends lamented on his account as injurious

to his interests, had since experienced a considerable depression, and he was now fully alive to the annoyances of his doubtful and unsettled position.

In his present state of feeling with respect to Lady Belvedere, he could not prevail upon himself to solicit an appointment similar to the one he had so opportunely lost, which might remove him far from her vicinity, and place a formidable barrier of years and distance between them. And yet what had he to expect, or even to hope, by remaining in England? He was well acquainted with the conditions on which she held her jointure; nor, were he even satisfied that he possessed her affections, could he, either as a man of sense or a man of honour, urge her to abandon her brilliant station and affluent circumstances to become the partner of his poverty and desperate fortunes?

The news of his infant cousin's death afforded certainly a gleam of hope to his de-

sponding spirit. He had thus become once more the heir-presumptive to the title and estates of his family. But "waiting for dead men's shoes," is, according to the proverb, but unprofitable occupation,—Sir Hugh was only fifty-six, and likely to live to a hundred; and, in the mean time, all that Harry had to depend upon was his captain's half-pay, and the income of his very small estate, charged with the maintenance of all his immediate relations.

Various were the projects of active enterprise and rapid advancement which his feverish brain pondered on by day, and dreamt of by night. Conscious of talent, he felt himself competent to any exertion of mind or body that might hold out to him a reasonable prospect of such success in life as would entitle him to come forward openly, in the character of an *aspirant* to the hand of Lady Belvedere. The dry detail and laborious study of the law,—the privations and

sacrifices of the clerical character,—or the busy conflict of politics, would alike, he thought, find in him an ardent and enthusiastic votary,—could that one bright speck on the horizon of his hopes but light him onward, and serve as a beacon to direct him in his course.

But it was to the exciting and ennobling scenes of public life that the aspirations of his ambition were more particularly directed. He felt that in the important and dignified arena of parliament, alone, could intellectual power at once attract universal attention, and command that station in the eyes of the world which seemed to him requisite for the attainment of his object.

In almost every other field of human exertion, the road to eminence is necessarily long and tedious. Few can hope to arrive at distinction until they have reached a period of life when they are no longer able to enjoy it;—a period when memory throws

a mantle of gloom over the past, and approaching age casts its chilling shadows over the future;—when the flame of ambition, if not wholly extinguished, emits but a rare and fitful blaze, and success loses half the charm which made it look so bright in anticipation, while viewed through the glowing medium of youthful hopes and feelings. But in the career of politics, there is many an instance of an early and rapid rise, succeeded by a steady course of prosperity. There, fortune is more liberal of those opportunities which it is the province and the privilege of genius to improve;—and he who by the fire of his eloquence, or the strength of his reasoning, can sway the opinions of assembled masses of men, or what is sometimes more to the purpose, furnish them with a specious pretext for adhering to those which they have already formed, may often get the start of time, and lead the blind goddess a willing captive in his train.

It was while occupied by a series of reflections similar to these, strongly tinged with that feeling of despondency to which the human mind is so prone to yield,—before breakfast,—that our hero was surprised one morning by the receipt of a letter from his uncle, Sir Hugh, which came by express, and which, although superscribed and headed *most private*, our literary privilege enables us to lay before the reader, without any breach of confidence, or departure from that discretion which, we trust, is conspicuous in our intercourse with the public.

"*Most private.*

"*Calverley Hall, Sept.* —, 1832.

"My dear Harry,

"I have been for some time past most anxious to express to you in person, my strong and sincere sympathy in your recent loss; but the unfortunate, and as they now (alas, too late!), appear to me,—senseless differences

which had produced so long an estrangement between your poor father and myself, made me hesitate as to the propriety of intruding upon you, during the first moments of your affliction.

"It will be to me a source of never-ceasing regret, that the suddenness of the attack which so unexpectedly terminated his life, and my absence from London at the time of the melancholy event, deprived me of the consolation I should have derived from being present at his last moments. To have seen him once more, even on his death-bed, and pressed his hand in token of a reconciliation so unhappily deferred, would be to me, now, an unspeakable, though a melancholy gratification. But such regrets are unavailing.

"I am much grieved to find, what I was not till very lately aware of, that my poor brother has died in far less affluent circumstances, than his family had reason to expect, and that an unpleasant change in your views

and prospects has been the result. I trust, however, you will believe, that, as far as it may be in my power to advance your interests, and contribute to the comfort of your position in life, you may rely with confidence on my exertions, and that you will not hesitate to put my regard to the test, should you have the slightest occasion to do so. As the eldest son of my only brother, you have every right to my interference in your favour; and since the death of my infant son, whom we have just had the misfortune to lose, (as you will have seen by the papers), you are placed in circumstances relatively to me, which materially strengthen your claim on my good offices.

"Indeed, my dear Harry, I will acknowledge to you, that my chief motive for addressing you on the present occasion, is connected with an object which intimately concerns, and may, I trust, beneficially affect your future prospects; should your ambition be commen-

surate to the talents, which, from my own observation, as well as from the report of others, I believe you to possess. Various reasons, with which you will hereafter be made acquainted, and which you will, I have no doubt, appreciate, make it inexpedient for me to be more explicit in this letter. What I have to say to you, can be fully developed only in a personal interview; but it is wholly out of my power to visit London, at this important crisis, when my presence *here* is of the most material consequence to the object I have in view. I have therefore to request that you will, on the receipt of this letter, proceed to Calverley Hall *with as little delay as possible; as every thing may depend on promptitude of action, and there is literally not a moment to be lost.*

"In the full confidence that you will not hesitate to comply with my request, I remain, my dear Harry, with the sincerest regard,

"Your affectionate uncle,

"HUGH SEYMOUR CALVERLEY."

"P.S.—Pray send me one line to say that you are coming. The messenger who will deliver this, has orders to start immediately on his return hither,—with your answer.—You had better take the mail to-morrow night, which arrives at Talkington the next day, at half-past one.—I repeat, I *reckon* upon seeing you the day after to-morrow;—and if you do not come by the mail,—let me know as nearly as possible, the hour at which you are likely to arrive."

The same express which conveyed the foregoing letter to our hero, brought him also a newspaper, addressed to him in Sir Hugh's hand-writing. It proved on examination to be a number of the —— County Chronicle; and he was for some time considerably perplexed to ascertain the reason of his being favoured with this specimen of the sovereign wisdom of the provincial oracle.—He very diligently explored column after column, without

discovering anything more satisfactory than a *rifaccimento* of London gossip, a week old, and a *consommé* of the political lucubrations of the various metropolitan "broad sheets;"—interspersed with such original matter as the following:—

"The Cattle-Fair at Oxwell, on Thursday last, was not so numerously attended as usual, in consequence of the unfavourable state of the weather—Nevertheless tolerably high prices were given, particularly for two-year old Alderney heifers," &c.

"Last week a turnip was cut in the field of Mr. Stubbs, farmer, of Balaam End, near Bamwell, measuring the enormous size of thirty-six inches in circumference," &c. &c.

"We understand Sir John Pocklington, Bart., of the Grange, has, in the most liberal manner, signified his intention of making a deduction of five-and-twenty per cent. on his half-yearly rents, due at Michaelmas. Should the honourable baronet yield to the earnest

entreaties of his friends, by coming forward as a candidate for the representation of the county," &c. &c.

"All this," thought Harry, "may be very well in its way; but what have I to do with it?—*Quid hoc ad Iphicli boves?*"—but as he was just throwing away the paper, in despair of extracting from it any information which might bear on Sir Hugh's mysterious and diplomatic epistle, his eye glanced over the page of advertisements, and alighted on a small cross made with a pen, and evidently intended to direct the attention of the reader to the article at the head of which it was placed.—Harry read as follows:—

"To the worthy and independent electors of Talkington.

"Gentlemen,

"Having had the honour to represent your ancient and respectable borough ever since my entrance into public life,—a period

of upwards of thirty years,—and proudly conscious that I have not forfeited my claims to the continuance of that favour to which I have been so often indebted for your disinterested and unanimous support, it is with feelings of no ordinary regret that I have come to the determination of declining to solicit your suffrages for the ensuing election.

"While the great question, so long the object of our patriotic exertions, remained undecided, no considerations of a personal nature should have induced me to retire from the field;—but now that the day is our own;—that the cause of freedom and reform has triumphed, I trust I may, without discredit to myself, or detriment to my country, withdraw from an active participation in those scenes of political excitement, for which the declining state of my health, and severe domestic affliction, have combined to unfit me.

"In resigning into your hands the sacred trust so long and so repeatedly confided to

the messenger, to say that he would obey the instructions which he had received; and as he ensconced himself that evening in the corner of the Talkington Mail, he revelled in the most joyous anticipations of success, and dropped asleep amid floating visions of greatness and glory, almost as distinct to his mind's eye, and nearly as fantastic, as the phantoms which took their place, when he had fairly sunk into the arms of Morpheus.

We think it fair to state, however, lest the reader should condemn him as foolishly sanguine, that his hopes were stimulated, and his fancy enlivened, by a bottle of *sillery*, of which he had partaken when dining at the J. U. S. with his friend Lumley: and with youth and champagne on his side, a man may always set the rigour of destiny at defiance.

END OF VOL I.

LONDON:
E. LOWE, PRINTER, PLAYHOUSE YARD, BLACKFRIARS.

HARRY CALVERLEY

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL HYDE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

M.DCCC.XXXV.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY E. LOWE, PLAYHOUSE YARD, BLACKFRIARS.

HARRY CALVERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Calverley had been so wholly engrossed by his own reflections, when he started on his journey, that he had scarcely noticed the appearance of the two individuals who were destined to be his travelling companions. He had indeed observed that one was a fat man, and the other a thin woman; but a grey camblet cloak, with a huge standing collar, lined with scarlet fleecy-hosiery, rendered the shape and features of the former matter rather of conjecture than accurate observation; and as to the lady, when we have stated that she

wore a fawn-coloured silk bonnet, covered with a green veil,—that she was wrapped in a coarse brown cloak, and was busily engaged in sucking one of three oranges which she had just bought from an itinerant Jew fruiterer, and deposited in what was by courtesy called a white cambric pocket-handkerchief, although neither very delicate in texture nor particularly snowy in hue:—when we have added, moreover, that, from time to time, she refreshed herself with a pinch of snuff out of a small paper *cornet*,—we consider that we have completely exonerated our hero from the charge of insensibility to the attractions of the fair, in not bestowing any considerable share of his notice on the nymph in question.

After a night of unbroken slumber, however, in spite of the grinding of carriage-wheels, and the activity of his own cogitations, the approach of day found him rather

less abstracted, and more alive to the impression of external objects. Most of his aspiring fancies had taken their departure with the more flimsy visions of the night, and he awoke to the full consciousness of a chilly morning, an expedition of doubtful wisdom, and the presence of a couple of illustrious unknown, who were still visibly and audibly under the influence of the drowsy god, and whose personal recommendations were by no means heightened by the disorganization inseparable from a night passed *en voiture*. The camblet had fallen from the neck of the male traveller, and discovered a remarkably red face, surmounted by a white cotton night-cap; and from a nose of fiery hue, and portentous projection, issued sounds that emulated the distant report of musketry.

Now there are, *selon nous*, few things more annoying than the unavoidable vicinity

of a person who snores outrageously, if you are not sufficiently intimate with the delinquent to rouse him to a sense of propriety, and thus put an end to the mitigated species of Roman torture, which the constant repetition of a certain nasal *roulade* inflicts on all whose nerves are not strung up to the very highest and most heroic pitch of impassibility; a state which is highly desirable for all who travel in public conveyances.

Be that as it may, however, Calverley experienced no small relief when the coach stopped at the town of D——, and the passengers being summoned to alight, for the twenty minutes' respite which the convenience of the public can barely allow them, for purposes of necessary refreshment, the musical slumbers of the "stout gentleman" were, perforce, interrupted.

Having gone through the important ceremony of breakfast,—and, to a gentleman, the

still more important operations of shaving and dressing,—our hero resumed his seat in the coach, and was not slow to perceive that the performance of similar duties seemed to have produced a favourable and enlivening effect on his *spherical* travelling companion. The snuffy, orange-sucking, and lanky female had been deposited somewhere in the neighbourhood of the *caravanserai;* and, as it seemed, for the remainder of the journey, the two gentlemen were destined to enjoy the pleasures of a tête-à-tête.

This is a position highly favourable to the intercourse of strangers, who are often withheld by the presence of a third person from making even the most obvious and commonplace advances towards conversation, lest the ungracious manner in which such advances are sometimes repelled, should be observed, and silently commented on, to the great mortification of the benevolently disposed and

adventurous colloquial volunteer, and the irreparable loss of his self-respect during the ensuing hour or two.

Our hero's travelling companion, however, was not a person likely to be influenced by any such feelings of pride under the mask of diffidence, and if he had not earlier indulged Calverley with the expression of his sentiments on a variety of important topics, it was because he had been too sleepy to talk. But in the present refreshed and reinvigorated condition of the physical and moral man, he felt the *besoin de causer* strong upon him, combined with a philosophical spirit of investigation into the past, present, and future affairs of the world in general, and our hero in particular.

In England, the first topic to be discussed between strangers must always be the weather—a subject soon exhausted, though probably more fruitful of materials for conversation in this country than in any other part

of the world: inasmuch as what is asserted of to-day, is seldom true concerning yesterday, and can never with any degree of certainty be predicted of to-morrow. Politics, of course, came next in the order of debate, and at the period of which we write, they were more completely than ever the engrossing theme of all tongues, the *alpha* and *omega* of every one's reflections and lucubrations—at home or abroad, in public or in private,—morning, noon, and night.

Once fairly launched in conversation with his "fat friend," Calverley felt that to avoid politics would be impossible, but full of the prospective pride of senatorial dignity, and deeply impressed with the necessity of discretion, where matters of such vital interest to himself—perhaps to his country! were at stake, he determined on being most guarded in the delivery of his political sentiments, and most careful not to commit himself by any gratuitous declaration of those opinions

into which a fellow-traveller in the mail-coach has certainly no positive right to enquire.

On the other hand, the curiosity of our camblet-cloaked friend was not wholly unmixed with caution, and, to say the truth, he seemed infinitely more desirous of extracting information from Calverley, upon every subject with which he concluded him to be familiar, than of imparting the results of his own philosophical reflections on affairs in general.

After the atmospheric phenomena had been fully discussed on both sides, and the chances of fine weather for the ensuing day weighed and summed up with much accuracy and perspicuity, the stranger put out a *feeler* on the inevitable topic.

"Well sir, we have *got the bill* at last."

"Yes," responded Calverley, with a nod that would have done credit to Lord Burleigh,

and a face that might have puzzled Pozzo di Borgo.

"A proper hard-fought battle they have had of it down in London there, in them two houses of Parliament," quoth the stranger.

"Very,"—was the oracular reply of our hero, and the expression of his countenance as he spoke would have defied the penetrating glance of a Talleyrand.

"Many a gentleman sat in that 'ere last House of Commons, that will never find his way into another," continued our friend in the camblet.

"Very likely,"—observed Calverley, as diplomatic as ever.

"Pray, sir," said the persevering politician, "how should you think the elections are likely to turn out; will the new Parliament be in favour of the ministers, think ye?"

"It is to be presumed that *they* think so

at all events," said Calverley, " by their dissolving the old one."

" Ay, ay, sir! to be sure;—very justly observed: but there is no saying for certain.—In our county, here, for instance, we expect a tough contest. They tell me Mr. Lindsey Wolsey, the great manufacturer down at R——, means to start on the pop'lar interest, again' General Saville, our late ministerial member: the Marquis of Raby is cock-sure of *his* return I take it, as nobody can go for to compete with the Mordaunt influence, so far as to oppose the duke's own son.—But as to t'other—It an't easy to say—Mr. Wolsey is richer than any one can tell, they say—and a free spoken liberal handed gentleman as can be, I'm told.—Then again the general's is one of the oldest families and oldest places in the county; very well liked he is too; only, poor man, they say his property is involved a bit—But he has been member for the county

these twenty years, and that's always in a man's favour;—though to be sure, in these times, the wealthy manufacturer is a person that—in short—without meaning to say anything disrespectful of the old here-ditary (he had evidently considerable difficulty in getting over this formidable word) families of the county—yet property, and capital, and all that sort of thing—are decidedly—in short —what do you think, sir?"

"Why sir," answered Calverley, laughing in his sleeve, but with every appearance of the most commendable gravity, "if you ask my candid opinion, I have no hesitation in saying, that I agree with you entirely in looking upon both the landed and the manufacturing interests, as political objects which it is impossible to disregard, and the maintenance of which is absolutely essential to the prosperity of the country. They are moreover so intimately connected with each other, that, as you

observe, it is most difficult to form a decided estimate of their relative importance."

"Precisely," observed the other, who not happening to see his way very clearly in political economy, was rather glad of any proposition to which he could assent, with anything like a comfortable assurance that he understood what was meant by it. Finding however, that there was not much to be elicited from our hero in the way of political sentiment, at least in reply to straight-forward enquiries—the talkative traveller shifted his ground.

"Nice weather for the sportsmen," quoth he, after a pause, "I suppose, sir, you mean to pop away at the partridges."

"Why," said Calverley, "I cannot say that I am much of a shot.—Do you consider ——shire a good sporting county generally?"

"Pretty well as to that, sir. The birds are plenty enough in our neighbourhood, at Talkington. Fine preserves on Sir Hugh

we have heard of no candidate in the Calverley interest. But Lord Belvedere means to start decidedly, I'm told."

"And *she* is canvassing for him?" enquired our hero, with still greater eagerness, and no very placid aspect.

"To be sure—who else—they say he's to be married to her."

"Umph," said Calverley.

"Do you know her, sir?" enquired the Talkington man. "They tell me she is very handsome."

"I have seen her," replied Calverley, "and can answer for the truth of the report.—But you said, if I mistake not, that Sir Hugh Calverley had been your member until lately. —How is it that he retires?"

"Oh, you know, one-half of our borough has been disfranchised—We are only to have one member for the future."

"What, I suppose Sir Hugh did not think

betray a suspicious degree of anxiety on the subject.

This apparent indifference was precisely the most diplomatic course he could pursue, and the best calculated to extract the whole truth from his talkative informant, whose communicativeness seemed to increase or diminish in the inverse ratio to the curiosity of our hero.

"Sir Hugh has been a staunch supporter of ministers," continued he, finding that Calverley made no observation on what had just been said; "and, of course, he expects that they'll give him a lift when they can: one good turn deserves another, you know."

These were undeniable truths, to which Calverley did not think it necessary to reply otherwise than by a nod of assent; although their application in the present case was an enigma, of which he greatly coveted the solution.

"He has had a long hankering after a

most unexceptionable postillions, in the family livery, drew up to the side of the coach.

It would be difficult to describe the look of consternation which the countenance of Calverley's fellow-traveller assumed when he heard our hero accosted by his name, and thus discovered his near connexion with the important personage whose political movements he had been discussing with so little ceremony.

"I declare—I protest," stammered he, while the servant was making the necessary transfer of luggage, "I had not the slightest notion,—I hope no offence, Captain Calverley—I am sure I meant nothing disrespectful of Sir Hugh—who is a most respectable gentleman, and a good customer of mine—and—and—but sometimes you know, sir—one talks"—

"My good sir," said Calverley, laughing, "there is no necessity for any apologies;—I don't in the least doubt your respect for my uncle; and, indeed, you will shortly have

an opportunity of giving the most convincing proof of it, by supporting the family candidate at the ensuing election. I wish you good morning."

So saying, Calverley stepped from the mail into the britska, and left his friend to meditate in solitude on the advantages of silence, and the necessity of discretion, particularly in our intercourse with strangers during a journey in the mail!

CHAPTER II.

We must now introduce the reader to the gothic library at Calverley Hall,—with its arched and fretted roof, its antique carvings, its well-filled and curtained shelves, its tall, narrow, and richly coloured windows, its easy chairs of every size and pattern, "with all appliances and means to boot," for study, and its too frequent attendant—sleep!—It seems a temple sacred to the Muses;—the chosen abode of classic retirement and lettered ease. —But it must be confessed, that the two individuals by whom it is at present occupied,

calculated to illustrate what we have to say respecting the exterior of the two gentlemen whom we are about to make known to the reader. The elder, who paces the room with an aspect of impatience, and rapid steps that fall noiseless on the thick Persian carpet, has more than passed the middle period of life; but a tall and well-proportioned figure, a high-bred commanding air, and a remarkably handsome countenance, in spite of advancing years, at once proclaim the man of gentle blood and refined habits.—He *must* be *somebody*:—It is Sir Hugh Calverley.

The younger, who is lolling negligently in a luxurious library chair, with eyes half-closed, —and one leg hanging over the arm of the *fauteuil*, humming at intervals an opera air, to which he keeps time by switching his boot with his cane, is best described by negatives. He is not handsome,—he is not ugly,—he is not fat,—he is not thin,—he is not tall,—neither is he short; he has a face that would

not misbecome the peer's robe, nor appear at all misplaced in the livery of the footman; it is not unsuited to the drawing-room; neither would it be *out of keeping* in the stables. His air is neither *distingué* nor insignificant. He *may* be *anybody;* It is Sir Hugh's brother-in-law, the Earl of Enniscorthy.

"Half-past two!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, looking at his watch, and speaking in a fretful tone; "half-past two, and no signs of him. The mail must have passed this half-hour; and I shall have the deputation here in five minutes—provoking!"

"Well, what if they do arrive a few minutes too soon," drawled or rather yawned Lord Enniscorthy. "They can wait."

"Wait!—and suppose he does not come after all?"—

"Umph.—You must only make them all drunk and send them back again. Or if you must have a candidate, and your man don't

turn up in time,—you may as well start—what's his name—your butler Walford."

"Lord Enniscorthy, this is no joking matter with me. It is a subject of serious importance, to my feelings, at least. Here is the nomination fixed for the day after to-morrow, and my candidate not as yet in the field.—Was that the sound of a carriage?" continued Sir Hugh eagerly, and stopping short in his walk.

"No," answered Enniscorthy, who sat near a window; "only the gardener's wheelbarrow. But, my dear Calverley, joking apart, if you are so desperately bent upon returning this nephew of yours for your remarkably dirty, and particularly hideous Borough of Talkington, why not give him rather earlier notice of your intentions?"

"How could I, until I was certain how I stood about this other business? I only received Lord ———'s letter on Saturday; my address was in the County Chronicle on Sun-

don't, it is not for want of hearing it. But if you are so particular about that, why not remain as you are, and continue to sit for it yourself? What can you want with a peerage?"

"What can *I* want with a peerage!—what does any man want with it? I believe, Lord Enniscorthy, the family of Calverley—I say nothing of its present representative, is quite as fit to be honoured with that dignity as half those who have already obtained it; not even excepting the house of *O'Reilly*, my lord."

"Psha! my dear Sir Hugh,—I know all that well enough; I mean no offence either to you or your ancestors. Quite the contrary. It is because I have such a profound veneration for your aristocratic claims as a baronet of the original batch, that I think a *new* peerage will not add much to your consequence."

this nephew of yours? I thought you were scarcely on civil terms with the junior branch of your family."

"Family misunderstandings need not last for ever, Enniscorthy," said Sir Hugh, with a sigh. "Harry is a fine young man, my nearest—I may almost say my only relation; and because I quarrelled with his father, or, rather, Lady Mary quarrelled with his mother, a dozen years ago, that is no reason why I should not countenance my nephew now; more especially, as he will in all probability be my heir"———

"And you are just at present in want of a candidate for Talkington," added Lord Enniscorthy drily.

The retort which this sneer would infallibly have drawn from Sir Hugh, was arrested on his lips by the entrance of the servant, with a face of importance.

"Is Captain Calverley arrived?" eagerly in-

quired Sir Hugh, before the servant had time to speak.

"No, Sir Hugh;—but the Mayor of Talkington and the gentlemen of the deputation are in the saloon, and wish to see you, Sir Hugh."

"What *is* to be done!" exclaimed the baronet in dismay; "what *can* detain my nephew! Did not the britska go to Bishop's Cross as I desired?"

"Certainly, Sir Hugh; but they could not well be back before this."

"Not before this! Why, it is near three o'clock, and the mail is usually in at two."

"Yes, Sir Hugh; but since they have had to go round by Bamwell, they are later, of course. It makes full three-quarters of an hour's difference."

"Round by Bamwell!—what should take them by that road?"

"If you please, Sir Hugh, the bridge at

Marbledyke gave way, and partly fell in yesterday; so that it an't passable for carriages, and they must take the lower road till it is repaired."

"And why the devil," said Sir Hugh, waxing very wroth, "why the devil was I not informed of this before?"

"We only heard it this morning when Jones arrived with your express from town, Sir Hugh."

"Well, well, we must go and endeavour to amuse the deputation, at all events. But, Enniscorthy, you came last from London, you must have known the cause of the delay,—why couldn't you tell me?"

"I—bless your soul! what could I know of the matter? I slept the whole way down!"

"Umph!" said Sir Hugh; "well, Walford, tell the gentlemen of the deputation that I will be with them immediately.—Is luncheon ready for them?"

"Quite ready, Sir Hugh."

becks and wreathed smiles," he made the circuit of the deputation, enquiring most affectionately for the wife of one, and the children of another; congratulating this person on his improved looks, and condoling with that on the depressed state of the manufacturing interests; in short, displaying an accurate acquaintance with the circumstances and position of each, as far as it was proper to allude to them; and exhibiting a minute recollection and correct application of names, christian and patronymic, which, from one of his aristocratic claims, and at any other but this precise juncture, would have been absolutely miraculous; an obliviousness of proper names in our intercourse with inferiors being, as is well known, a distinctive mark of aristocracy and high-breeding.

So persevering was he in the distribution of these judiciously directed and elaborate courtesies, that some minutes elapsed before the mayor, who headed the deputation, (although

bad practice to transact business on an empty stomach!"

So saying, he led the way into the banquetting-room, the folding doors of which had just been thrown open, and the cold collation that presented itself to the admiring eyes of the deputation, served effectually for a time to divert their attention from the political object of the meeting, while the rapid circulation of Sir Hugh's champagne produced the usual effect of that exhilarating beverage on the spirits of the company, and warmed their already friendly dispositions into a glow of enthusiasm, in favour of a patron whose public principles and private hospitality were alike so unexceptionable.

All this time, however, Sir Hugh was suffering little short of martyrdom in the way of suspense, and sinking every moment deeper into despondency as to the result of a ceremonial which he had intended to be peculiarly effective. Whether his nephew were

to arrive or not, he was fully determined, at all hazards, to have him put in nomination; but he greatly dreaded the ridicule that would attach to the whole affair, should the neatly prepared requisition, couched in such flattering and appropriate terms, as we shall presently see, be destined to return unpresented, and unacknowledged, to the place from whence it came, and the august *cortége*, who had so obligingly voted it, and were now waiting to present it to—they knew not exactly whom, —be forced to take their departure without having their hearts gladdened by the sight of their well-beloved though somewhat problematical candidate, whose talents and virtues they had kindly agreed to take on trust.

But whatever were his apprehensions, his prime object was to conceal them from the notice of his guests, and to delay as long as possible, an explanation which could not fail to be rather embarrassing:—No one who

merely judged by his countenance, could have imagined that anything was amiss in the arrangements of the day—that there was a screw loose in the machinery which he had taken so much pains to set in motion. Like the pious Æneas

"Spem vultu simulat; premit alto corde dolorem;"

he talked—he laughed—he joked, until the whole deputation were captivated by his spirits, his wit, and his affability. He was ably seconded in his convivial efforts by Lord Enniscorthy, on whom the novelty of the scene, and the comicality of Sir Hugh's dramatic position had a very enlivening effect. Thus roused from his habitual laziness, and "doing the civil" with wonderful assiduity, his lordship appeared to great advantage in the eyes of the deputation, most of whom supposed him to be their unknown candidate, as Sir Hugh's introduction of him had been confined to the mayor, and had not been overheard by the rest of the party.

hurry these gentlemen, you know, but if you have finished your luncheon, I should like just to speak one word to you, in the library."—

"I attend you with much pleasure, Sir Hugh," answered the obsequious Shufflebotham, jumping up with alacrity.

"You will have the goodness to bring the requisition with you," whispered the baronet, "as I want to cast my eye over it.—Enniscorthy, I depend on your taking care of these gentlemen in my absence."

"The fact is, my dear Shufflebotham," said Sir Hugh, in his most insinuating manner, and as soon as they were closeted, tête-à-tête, "I find myself in a little embarrassment; for owing to the state of the roads, or some other cause which I am unable to guess at, our candidate is, I am sorry to say, not yet arrived."

"Really!"—said Mr. Shufflebotham, with a considerably elongated visage,—"rather awkward, Sir Hugh."

woman she is, I can tell you, Sir Hugh) canvassing for him in every direction; while we are likely it seems to have nobody but a man of straw."

"A *what*, Mr. Mayor?" said Sir Hugh, rather pointedly.

"Oh! Sir Hugh!" quoth the worthy magistrate, whose devotion to the champagne had been perhaps, a shade too intense, and who in consequence, was what is vulgarly called "pot valiant,"—"Oh! Sir Hugh, I mean no offence to your relation, who, I make no doubt, is a very worthy gentleman, and all that,—but what I mean to say is this, Sir Hugh, that this here deputation will cut a deucedly ridiculous figure, if we have to walk back to Talkington with our fingers in our mouths,—we shall be the laughing stock of the borough! and then when the election begins; to have to fight the battle of somebody whom nobody knows, and none of us have seen, against the head of the family on t'other

side! It an't quite pleasant, Sir Hugh, to me specially; for however I may wish, as I do wish, to keep up the political connexion of the borough with your family, Sir Hugh, yet, in my official capacity, one does not like to compromise oneself—that's all."

It is well known that the period immediately preceding an election, is like the Roman Saturnalia, when the slave was *pro tempore*, invested with all the prerogatives, and allowed to indulge in twice the insolence of freedom; when those who during the rest of the year, quailed beneath the glance of a despotic master, were considered at liberty to speak their mind with perfect openness, and animadvert on his proceedings in terms frequently more conspicuous for candour than courtesy. We presume, that in the long run, their backs suffered, *et que le diable n'y perdait rien;* but with that we have nothing to do. The existence of a similar privilege, as possessed by British electors,

and a Coriolanus, too proud
blandishments, and submit t
which seem to be *de rigue*
course of an *aspirant* for se
with his own peculiar section
reign people." But Sir Hu
Talkington had till recently
than a close borough, the el
were ready to return anybody
sentative, whom their patron,
might think fit to recommend
was not quite broken in to the
style. He drew himself up with
cast on the presumptuous Sl
glance of withering scorn that
misbecome "the brow of Jov
regardless of consequences, g
lofty indignation as follows:—

of the Mayor of Talkington can be *compromised* by supporting any member of *my* family whom I may consider a fit person to represent the borough? Do you recollect whom you are speaking to, sir? Is it not sufficient that the candidate is *my* nephew,—that he is of *my* house! Why, sir, if I chose to stick up my wig-block, with the name of Calverley attached to it, as a candidate for your paltry borough, I would have you to know that I would carry the day against all the Tyringhams that ever appeared on the hustings;—ay! and their wives and daughters to boot; or, by the Lord! the electors of Talkington should be let into a secret which they might not find very agreeable!"

It must be acknowledged that this last sally was a little in the style of the illustrious Gessler; the idea being in fact rather an improvement on the well-known edict of that amiable and facetious viceroy. But Sir Hugh was in a passion, and did not exactly know what

he was saying; while Mr. Shufflebotham, honest man! had fortunately, very little of the spirit of William Tell in his composition. He at once perceived that he had been injudicious and precipitate. Still he could not suffer so glaring an insult to be offered to the municipal majesty of his native town, without saying a few words by way of protest or remonstrance.

"Sir Hugh," quoth he, "I have already expressed my high respect for you and yours; but you must allow me to say that the day is gone by for such doings. The electors of Talkington, Sir Hugh, are free agents; and though, from attachment to an ancient family, whose principles they approve of, Sir Hugh, their votes may be influenced by your recommendation, yet, independent citizens, Sir Hugh, will make their own choice, and are not to be dictated to, like a parcel of niggers afraid of the overseer's cart-whip. We are free-born Englishmen, and——"

nor do I mean to cast any reflection on the worthy electors of the borough, when I say that I believe they would, one and all, choose Lord Belvedere, or anybody else to-morrow, if they believed it to be more to their individual *advantage*. This, I am aware, would not do for the hustings, Mr. Mayor; but it is plain English, in answer to tolerably plain speaking from you. Now I would just observe, that I can form a pretty correct estimate of the *auxiliary* motives, which, in addition to patriotism, political consistency, and so forth, may *possibly* influence some of the electors of Talkington, in favor of my family. I say nothing of what is passed, Mr. Mayor; of certain situations, in the gift of the government, obtained, through my interest, for some of your friends. It is not at my time of life, that a man can believe in *gratitude*. But we may believe in prudence and foresight. Now my worthy friends at Talkington, are, I believe, tolerably well aware of the position in

which I stand with respect to the ministry;—they need not be told, that, humble and insignificant as I may be, personally, my connexions in both houses, Mr. Mayor, make my adherence a matter of some slight consequence to his Majesty's government; in short, they have sense enough to see that, were they to return Lord Belvedere, with his high Tory notions, and uncompromising opposition to the present Cabinet, and without political connexions of any sort, they would not be in possession of quite so convenient a channel through which the stream of ministerial patronage may flow amongst them, as they will by electing a Calverley, pledged to support the measures of government, and acting in concert with no inconsiderable party in both houses of parliament. This is my view of the case, Mr. Mayor, even without reference to my territorial rights, or the influence which a *resident* landed proprietor may be supposed to exercise over the prosperity of the borough; this is the reason why

I am disposed to think the cause nearly independent of the *personal* presence of the candidate, and your newly-assumed political squeamishness singularly misplaced."

"I assure you, Sir Hugh," said the humbled and somewhat conscience-stricken magistrate, who, at the moment called to mind sundry of his own immediate relations, converted into post-masters, tide-waiters, receivers of customs, &c., chiefly through the Calverley interest, and was perfectly aware of the advantages which might result to his three lubberly sons, from the permanency of so valuable a connexion; "I assure you, Sir Hugh, you quite mistake me, if you can for a moment fancy that I meant anything unhandsome or disrespectful to such excellent friends. What I said was as much on your own account, Sir Hugh, as on mine; but I have no doubt you will carry the day triumphantly, and we shall all be delighted to return your nephew, as in duty bound."

"Well, well," said Sir Hugh, fully restored

to his usual equanimity, "let us say no more about the matter, Mr. Shufflebotham; you were rather too easily alarmed, and I dare say I was a little too hasty. All will go on right, I have no doubt; and my nephew will be here in a few minutes, I am confident. But in the mean time, let me just see the requisition, in case there should be anything in it which we could improve."

"You will find it drawn up exactly according to your directions, Sir Hugh; and, indeed, I believe, in almost the very words you suggested. Unless Mr. Hemmingway may have put in a word here and there, just to show his scholarship, of which he is mightily proud, Sir Hugh."

The baronet unrolled the parchment, and read as follows:—

"*To*—(a blank for the name.)

"SIR,

"We, the undersigned electors of Tal-

kington, earnestly desirous to perpetuate the connexion which has so long and so honourably subsisted between the house of Calverley and our ancient and loyal borough, respectfully entreat that you will honour us by coming forward as a candidate for the representation of Talkington, at the ensuing election.

"It is with the sincerest and most heartfelt regret that we have witnessed the retirement of our late worthy and distinguished representative, Sir Hugh Calverley, whose zeal and ability in the discharge of his parliamentary duties, in that capacity, during a period of upwards of thirty years, entitle him to our warmest gratitude; but while we lament the loss we sustain in his valuable and patriotic exertions, we feel that we cannot more effectually testify our sense of his public services, or our affectionate attachment to his person, than by selecting for his successor, a gentleman whose hereditary claims on our regard, as a member of the same family, are so power-

fully strengthened by his acknowledged talents, and conspicuous private worth.

"In the full but respectful confidence that you will accede to our request, we have the honour to be, with the highest esteem,

"Your obedient humble Servants,

"NATHANIEL SHUFFLEBOTHAM, *Mayor.*

"JOB HEMMINGWAY, *Town Clerk.*"

&c. &c. &c. &c.

"Very good—very proper—Mr. Mayor," said Sir Hugh; "I have no criticism to make;" which was not wonderful, seeing that the document was nearly verbatim the worthy baronet's own composition; "but you may as well insert the name."

"Oh, certainly, Sir Hugh. Who is the gentleman, pray? we have not yet heard his name."

"Oh, ay!—very true, my dear Mr. Shufflebotham. I had my reasons for not being too precipitate in disclosing it; but as I have now

determined to put him in nomination at all events, there can be no object in concealing it.—It is my nephew, Captain Calverley—Harry Calverley, Esq."

At this moment, the sound of carriage-wheels, gradually approaching, was heard, and Sir Hugh, hurrying to the window, had the inexpressible satisfaction to see the britska sweeping rapidly up the avenue.

"Hurrah! here he is!" exclaimed the baronet. "Mr. Mayor, have the goodness to rejoin the deputation for a few moments in the banquetting-room. I must just speak a few words to my nephew, in private,—Stay, you may as well leave me the requisition. I will take care to give you due notice when he is in readiness to receive it—which will be in a very few minutes; and, in the mean time, entertain these gentlemen as well as you can."

CHAPTER III.

The interview between the uncle and the nephew could scarcely fail to be a little embarrassing to both parties, for on one side there was the recollection of slight and neglect,—on the other, the consciousness of former unkindness, while on both there was an uncomfortable conviction that the advances towards a better understanding were rather ascribable to considerations of expediency, than to any more generous or disinterested feeling. But it is fortunate that in the intercourse of society we are not necessarily

obliged to scrutinize motives, with that rigid spirit of enquiry that belongs to the investigation of facts. It is well that we can all be occasionally deceived, or, at least, that we can affect to be so; and if the important inculcation of habitual veracity has been qualified by the phrase of "*toutes les vérités ne sont pas bonnes à dire*,—how much more undeniably may we assert *que toutes les vérités ne sont pas bonnes à savoir*. Who that has read Madame de Genlis's graceful and philosophical fiction, *Le Palais de la Vérité*, but must acknowledge the importance of this species of delusion to the preservation of peace and good-humour in society; to the maintenance of all the best affections of our nature, and, consequently, to the security of the various links of that social chain that binds man and man together!

But we must return to our hero and Sir Hugh, who, after an interval of several years of estrangement, found themselves thus con-

fronted in a *tête-à-tête*. The baronet exerted himself vigorously to cover his embarrassment by an appearance of extreme cordiality; while Harry, who felt that at any rate *he* had nothing to be ashamed of, received his demonstrations of regard with becoming courtesy indeed, but still with a slight air of reserve and coldness, of which he found it difficult at once to divest himself.

"Welcome, welcome to Calverley Hall, my dear boy!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, advancing with outstretched hands and smiling aspect to receive his nephew; "I have been looking for you with the utmost impatience."

"I have lost no time in obeying your summons, Sir Hugh," answered Harry, "as you must perceive."

"Undoubtedly, my dear Harry! and your promptitude is most fortunate, for every moment is precious, with reference to the object that we have in view.—Although I could not, for various reasons, explain myself completely

in my letter to you, I conclude you are at no loss to understand why I have solicited your presence at Calverley at this precise juncture; and your compliance with this request is, I am confident, an earnest that you are prepared to accede to my wishes in the material point in question. Is it not so?"

"I might affect to misunderstand you, Sir Hugh," answered Calverley, "and thereby endeavour to enhance the merit of my subsequent compliance; but however correct such conduct might be in politics, it would not be consistent with candour. I am a soldier, and no diplomatist. Your letter, I acknowledge, was in some respects a mystery to me; but the newspaper which accompanied it, left no doubt as to your object. I do not, therefore, hesitate to say, that I have come down here on the supposition that you wish me to become a candidate for the representation of the Borough of Talkington."

politics, Sir Hugh, I could not for a moment have entertained your proposition, had not my political sentiments been in accordance with those which I believe you to hold. As far, however, as I can make up my mind on matters which require so much thought and deliberation, I am disposed to place great confidence in the present administration; and there is, I think, every probability that the measures which they are likely to propose in parliament, will be such as to ensure my cordial and conscientious support. But I will not, and cannot pledge myself blindly and prospectively to the support of any body of men, who, for aught I know, may adopt to-morrow a line of policy diametrically opposite to that which they pursue to-day. As long as I approve of their measures, and consider their existence as a ministry beneficial to the country, they will have my vote;—but no longer. This I conceive to be a point of honour and

sume, therefore, you may set your mind at rest; *some* expence there will of course be, for committees, hustings, poll-booths, and so forth; but it will be a mere trifle. As you are going to stand at my request, and to oblige me, I cannot understand how you can have any thing to say to it; but we will not quarrel about such nonsense: and all that can be settled by and by. With respect to your first condition, all I have to say is, that I applaud your independence. My own support of the ministry is, of course, as contingent as yours. I shall, therefore, require no pledge of fanatical partizanship. I am satisfied to know that you are friendly to the avowed principles and general policy of Lord ——; from these I am convinced, that his ministry will not depart; and so far there is, I think, a moral certainty of their retaining your confidence as well as mine. I foresee that we are likely to agree very well on politics; and, at all events, we shall

stranger in the place.—I did not imagine that the people of Talkington were even aware of my existence."

"Oh, that is of no consequence!" said Sir Hugh laughing, "the Talkingtonians are very clever people in their way, and have a particular knack of anticipating the talents, and prophecying the virtues of the members of my family, even before they have ever seen or heard of the individual. Here is the requisition; I believe you will find it fit quite as well as if you had been measured for it."

"Well," continued the baronet, as soon as Calverley had glanced over the document, at the top of which his name had now been inserted, "will that do?"

"Nothing can be more satisfactory," said Harry laughing.

"Come then, we must adjourn to the saloon; for these gentlemen are waiting, and very impatient."

"But, Sir Hugh," said Calverley, "you

of Talkington, demands my warmest and most sincere acknowledgments. I should indeed prove myself wholly unworthy of this most gratifying mark of your favour, if I could hesitate for a moment to respond to the flattering call which it conveys.

"I am well aware that it is to your long tried attachment to my family,—to your reliance upon those principles, by a strict adherence to which, they have been hitherto so fortunate as to preserve your regard and confidence, rather than to any personal claims of my own, that I shall be indebted for the enviable distinction which your unsolicited suffrages can alone bestow; and I beg to assure you, that if I should be so fortunate as to become your representative, it will ever be my anxious care to merit the continuance of your favour by a rigid and conscientious discharge of my parliamentary duties, and by my watchful guardianship of the sacred trust reposed in me."

"There—there!" said Sir Hugh, "I told you that you would not have to pledge yourself to anything; and I am sure you could not well be more vague in your promises, if you meant to *rat* once a fortnight. So put your name to it at once, and let us get rid of these people as fast as we can. All this sort of thing is a great nuisance, I know, but it is inevitable, and we must only make the best of it."

"I am much obliged to you, Sir Hugh," said Harry laughing, as he signed the paper, "for saving me so much trouble, and especially for the tenderness which you have shewn for my conscience, in this most diplomatic document: I had no idea that so unsophisticated a constituency could be found since the passing of the reform bill. I am quite at the service of my confiding friends, and am most anxious to receive their complaisant deputation. As I am not however quite *au fait* in these matters,—you will have

the goodness to prompt me, if I should fail in any point of *etiquette*."

"There is no fear," said Sir Hugh, as they passed into the saloon, "all you have to do is to be as gracious as possible, and read your lesson in an audible voice. We shall be well rid of them in five minutes, I trust; for we got all the eating and drinking over before your arrival."

The deputation were now summoned,—Sir Hugh and the future candidate took their station, at the upper end of the room; and the worshipful Mr. Shufflebotham, Mayor of Talkington, attended by Mr. Hemmingway, Town Clerk, and the whole *cortége*, marched or rather waddled into the room,—Lord Enniscorthy bringing up the rear, and with difficulty preserving the degree of gravity befitting so august an occasion. It is but fair, however to his lordship to state, that the eccentric movements of some worthy members

of the deputation, who had made tolerably good use of their time at the luncheon table, and had not sufficiently attended to the distinction which exists between champagne and table beer, when considered with reference to the capacity of the stomach or head,—afforded but too legitimate grounds for merriment. But, thanks to his little *démêlé* with Sir Hugh, —the mayor was quite sober, and Mr. Hemmingway, on whom the duty of reading the requisition devolved, not more than half-seas over; so that matters were, upon the whole, as decorously managed as could well be expected under the circumstances.

Sir Hugh introduced his nephew in form, and all parties bowed and smiled as graciously as possible; the deputation drew up in a figure that was probably intended either for a straight line or a semicircle, but which it would have puzzled a mathematician to describe; the two *proceres*, Shufflebotham and Hem-

mingway took their station, at the right of the column, a little in advance, and the business of the day seemed about to begin; when there was a pause; the mayor looked at the town clerk—and the town clerk looked at the mayor,—the latter gave the former a slight hint with his elbow, by way of a flapper,—and the former responded by contracting his brows, and shrugging his shoulders in token of remonstrance. Something had evidently gone wrong. But Sir Hugh, perceiving their perplexity, and anxious to shorten the affair as much as possible, observed, rather impatiently,

"Well, gentlemen,—we are all ready! Why do we not proceed to business?—is there anything the matter?"

"No, Sir Hugh," said the mayor, casting an uneasy glance at his colleagues, and another round the room, "only the—the requisition. Has any body seen it?"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the ba-

ronet, " I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Mr. Shufflebotham,—it is all my fault.—I left it in the library.—Walford, bring the roll of vellum which you will find on my writing-table; quick, sir."

Walford disappeared; and in due time returned with the document in question, which being handed to Mr. Hemmingway, was by that gentleman read, if not " with good emphasis and due discretion," at least, without much hesitation, and as intelligibly as could be expected, considering his peculiar condition.

It was now Calverley's turn; and the reader, we trust, needs not to be told, that he performed his part in the most unexceptionable manner, and read his answer to the requisition with much grace, dignity, and deliberation. The tone of deep *conviction*, as the French say, with which he spoke of the future discharge of his duties as a senator, was such as visibly to affect his confiding constituents, and excite their feelings in his favour to a

pitch of maudlin enthusiasm, equally significant of patriotism and champagne. When he had concluded, an unanimous burst of applause bore unequivocal testimony to their satisfaction.

And thus, having at length fulfilled the important object of their mission, the respectable deputation withdrew, in high good humour with the hospitality of their late, and the sound political principles of their future representative: — the worshipful Mr. Shufflebotham being, indeed, the only person whose gratification was qualified by a slight shade of disappointment;—for he had hoped that Sir Hugh would have asked him to stay to dinner.

CHAPTER IV.

"And now, my dear Harry," said Sir Hugh, "having dispatched those tiresome people, allow me to have the pleasure of introducing my brother-in-law, Lord Enniscorthy;—Enniscorthy, my nephew, Captain Calverley."

Harry bowed rather distantly, as he had no great prepossession in favour of the brother of Lady Mary, to whose good offices he mainly attributed the previous estrangement of the families; but Enniscorthy advanced, and held out his hand in the most frank and cordial manner.

"Captain Calverley has forgotten me, I see," said he, "but I have a very distinct and agreeable recollection of meeting him in Dublin, at the mess of the —th, four years ago, when I had a company in that very boisterous regiment,—the Devil's Own, as they called us. Surely you must remember it, Captain Calverley?—we had a glorious night of it; by the same token that we all got extremely drunk, I am afraid;—at least I can answer for myself."

"I can assure your lordship," said Calverley, "that I have not forgotten the hospitality of the —th, nor the highly convivial evening I was so fortunate as to spend at their table; and your countenance struck me, the moment you entered the room, as one with which I was familiar; but I presume I did not hear your name on the occasion to which you refer,—for—"

"Why the fact is, my dear sir, my name, or at least my designation, has been changed

in the interval. It was during my poor brother's life-time, that we met, and I was then generally known as Jack O'Reilly—better known than trusted, I am afraid;" continued he laughing—"but, under whatever name, I am most happy to renew my acquaintance with you."

The openness of Lord Enniscorthy's manner soon overcame the reserve of our hero, who being a remarkably *bad hater*, at all times, was particularly so when he could not assign his antipathies to any better cause than prejudice; and this, *soit dit en passant*, is more than can be said for the greater proportion of the good sort of people who compose this candid and charitable world.

"We have been so actively engaged in political affairs, since my arrival," said Harry, "that I have positively neither had time nor opportunity, to attend to the duties of society. I have not yet enquired for Lady Mary, Sir Hugh;—I trust her ladyship is well."

"Much as usual, I thank you," said Sir Hugh, "she has always very delicate health, and since the death of my poor boy, her nerves are sadly shattered;—but she will be most happy to see you presently."

"Ah, by the by," said Lord Enniscorthy, "I must go and ask Mary how she does. But I know there is little chance of her being visible before six o'clock. On her sofa as usual, I suppose, with her vinaigrette in one hand, and the latest scientific publication in the other.—Talk of the nerves of a lady who reads political economy! What lions has she about her now?"

"We have scarcely anybody here at present;" answered Sir Hugh, with difficulty suppressing his irritation at Enniscorthy's comments on Lady Mary's valetudinarian and literary pretensions; not that he felt much affection for the individual; but because he thought his own dignity impaired by these irreverent allusions to his wife;—"the state

of Lady Mary's health will not allow of our seeing much company just now. As for *lions*, as you call them, Lord Enniscorthy, I acknowledge that I rather encourage her taste for the society of distinguished people,—as their conversation really diverts her mind, and prevents her from giving way altogether. Any thing that interests, without too much exciting her, is, I conceive, decidedly beneficial."

"Oh, Lord, I am sure I don't object to it;" said Enniscorthy; "it is a tolerably innocent and harmless fancy; much better than a taste for light dragoons or evangelical preachers, particularly the last. I never knew any good come of a lady's being a *parson-fancier*."

"We have nobody of any particular note here," said Sir Hugh, "but Sowerby, the African traveller, who lately published that highly interesting account of the Great Pyramid; and Scalp, who writes those clever

articles in the ———;—both very entertaining people in their way; the latter really a person with a good deal of *usage du monde*, for a professional *littérateur;*—and Sowerby is still better in his peculiar style—so very eccentric—so perfectly original."

"So perfectly impudent—you mean;" muttered Enniscorthy, *sotto voce;* "and pray," continued he, aloud, "is his wife here too?"

"Of course—you know she is a prodigious friend of Lady Mary's."

"Ah, yes, I know,—she keeps her in metaphysics and political economy. Well, I hope they will be merciful;—I am a plain man, fond of a quiet life, and rather afraid of being shut up in the house with clever people."

"Oh, you can keep out of their way, you know;" said Sir Hugh, rather sneeringly; "and I dare say you will find two or three people here, who may be more of your own calibre, in point of science. The whole party

have ridden over to D——, this afternoon, to view the Roman encampment;—but Lady Mary must be at home, I should imagine; and I will go and see if she is well enough to receive you before dinner."

"Pray, do not allow her ladyship to inconvenience herself on my account;" said Calverley.

"You need not trouble yourself to give such a caution," said Lord Enniscorthy, as Sir Hugh left the room, "*that* she never does for anybody, as my worthy brother-in-law knows to his cost. My sister is a regular *malade-imaginaire*, and a little jealous of all her assumed prerogatives, as an invalid. But you may as well take a turn in the shrubbery with me; for we have no chance of seeing her ladyship before dinner-time, I will answer for it. If we were a couple of Swedish professors, with jaw-breaking names, and green mustachios, she would have met us under the

portico;—but brothers and nephews are common-place sort of people, and can afford to wait her leisure."

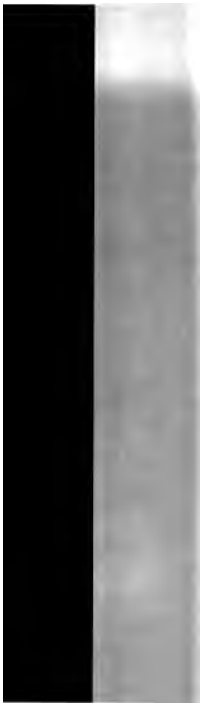
"Your account of the society at Calverley, is rather alarming;" said Harry. "I hope the atmosphere of science does not extend to the borough, if so, I shall be rather puzzled how to address the electors."

"The science of good-living is, I should fancy, their favourite study, if we may judge from the deputation. But there is nothing very formidable at Calverley after all. These Sowerbys are bores, certainly, but they are also humbugs of the first class, and when once you are convinced of that, it is rather entertaining to watch their operations. They are both, at heart, the veriest tuft-hunters extant; but they apply very opposite means to the same end:—*she* makes her way by dint of toadying,—*he* by sheer force of impudence; and when you add their literary and scientific pretensions to all that, you may ima-

gine that they are occasionally past endurance.—He is never happy but amongst fine people, and not having sense enough to distinguish between gentlemanly independence of manner and vulgar assumption, he takes a pride in treating every body in general, and his superiors in particular, with a degree of coarse and insolent familiarity, and positive rudeness, for which he deserves to be kicked first, and cut afterwards."

"And is it possible," said Harry, "that with such a character, he can be a favourite in society?"

"A favourite?—not he! but he is in great request, which answers his purpose quite as well. Some very great people like to be bullied now and then, by way of novelty, provided it is done with sufficient art to amuse them; and where *they* are, the rest of the world submit to similar treatment, in compliment to the precedent. Thus, by little and little, what with an occasional clever thing said here and



I suppose.—I say, Aylmer, do you know them?"

"Hush!" said the person addressed, who was not quite habituated to his companion's *manière d'être*.

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Sowerby.—"Oh!" exclaimed he, on recognising Lord Enniscorthy, "it's you, is it?—how goes it?" extending his fore-finger in the most condescending manner imaginable.

"How do?" said Lord Enniscorthy, with a familiar nod, but without paying any attention to the extended digit; "how is Mrs. Sowerby?"

"There she is, you may make your enquiries of her—she is quite competent to answer for herself. Well, but who would have thought of seeing you here? I was told you were completely done up, and had gone abroad to retrench."

"A report, about as much to be depended

Guardsman, was not much pleased with the mandate, and still less with the style in which it was issued; but he was rather awed by the reputation of Mr. Sowerby, and a good deal influenced by the deference which his elders paid to that assuming individual, so he shrugged his shoulders, clapped spurs to his horse, and rode off in the direction which the pony-chaise had taken.

"Why, you have made Heneage as active and submissive as an aid-de-camp," said Colonel Aylmer.

"To be sure;—what's the use of these Guardsmen puppies, if they don't fetch and carry? But, hang it! they are all going on together, instead of coming back, as I told them."

"Perhaps you had better go after them yourself," said Enniscorthy, "and I'll give you a good start, that you may be able to overtake them;" so saying, he seized the riding-whip from Sowerby's hand, and giving

a sudden and vigorous cut over the hind-quarters of the cob which he bestrode, sent the animal kicking and plunging at a furious rate, to the great discomfiture of the rider, whose equestrian skill was somewhat below par, and to the inexpressible delight of all the spectators, who would have gladly seen him measure his length, or, perhaps, we should say, his breadth, on the ground.

Dire was the expression, and purple the hue of his face, minacious alike of vengeance and apoplexy, as, after a short contest with his refractory steed, he contrived to re-establish his authority, and rejoin the group. But prudence forbade him to exhibit in any more decided manner the irritation of his feelings; an appearance of perfect recklessness and *insouciance* upon all occasions, being part of the system by which he sought to maintain his footing in society.

"A lively beast that of yours!" said Scalp, a tall, thin, gentlemanly looking man, with rather

a cynical aspect. "A little too skittish, or so:—why don't you punish him?"

"I leave that to you," growled Sowerby.—"If you think he wants the lash, you had better review him."

"*Grand merci*," said Scalp, "I fly at higher game; Lord Enniscorthy may if he chooses, do justice on the horse—I claim the rider."

"Well said! Nimrod!" exclaimed Colonel Aylmer.

"A mighty hunter, and his game was man."

"But sharp must be the weapon which can penetrate the cuticle of our friend—I take him to be critic-proof."

"Ah!" said Lord Enniscorthy, "if he would only

'Doff that lion's hide,
And hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs!'

"When I take you for my model in dress—I shall certainly do so," said Sowerby gruffly, "though I should despair of achieving so

good a fit. But as to Scalp, I own, I am not without serious apprehensions; for we all know his weapon is remarkable for the *fineness* of *its temper*."

"Dismiss your fears, I beg," said Scalp, after the laugh caused by this home-thrust had subsided; "I am not in the humour to cut blocks with a razor; and now I think of it, you are not in my department, my dear Sowerby—We hunt the lion, the stag, the nobler animals, with spear and hound; but the ox we generally leave to the *abattoir*."

"But I beg leave to advance another claim for Sowerby:—do you never chase the *bore*?" said Enniscorthy.

"Only in his wild state," answered Scalp, "and your lordship will I think acknowledge that our friend is *tame* enough in any conscience."

The skirmish of words was here interrupted by the approach of the pony-phaeton; and the presence of the ladies interposed an effec-

tual check on the further exchange of these literary and social courtesies, which to our hero, had all the charm of novelty to recommend them, if in other respects they did not tend much to his edification.

In Heneage, Harry recognised an old acquaintance; and Mrs. Aylmer, who was both young and pretty, being, to his surprise, identified with a Miss *Somebody*, with whom he had often danced and flirted a year or two previously, when quartered at Hounslow, he was rather gratified to observe the evidence of an equally accurate recollection on her part, in the slight blush which heightened the colour of her cheek, as she approached, and the timid bow of recognition, which of course he acknowledged with all due *empressement*.

Mrs. Sowerby was equally prompt in recognising Lord Enniscorthy, who had too much of the spirit of chivalry about him, to allow her to perceive that he thought her a bore—

a less offensive bore than her husband, certainly,—but still a bore;—and he submitted with great philosophy to the infliction of some very eloquent remarks from her scientific lips, on the science of castrametation among the ancients, àpropos of her morning's drive.—Indeed she discoursed as learnedly touching the *vallum*, the *fossa*, the *pali*, the imperial *tentorium*, the separate and distinct location of the prætorians, the cohorts, and the auxiliaries, &c. &c.—as if she had served the office of quarter-master general to Julius Cæsar, on his invasion of our island.—She produced moreover a bit of an old horse-shoe, picked up during their antiquarian researches, which she exhibited in triumph as bearing internal evidence of having belonged to the *lorica*, or breast-plate, of some Roman hero, certainly not under the rank of a centurion—and the rusty brass top of an old-fashioned parasol, which she strongly surmised to be the *umbo* or boss of some contemporaneous buckler;

whether of the *clypear*, or *parmular* order, she could not however, venture to determine.

All this was little short of martyrdom to Enniscorthy, who held the whole tribe of antiquarians, and especially the females of the species, in especial abhorrence; but with the laudable hypocrisy of good breeding, he lent a courteous, and to all appearance, a willing ear to Mrs. Sowerby's display of erudition;—congratulated her with a most serious face, on her acquisition of such valuable memorials of so interesting an event as the Roman conquest, and strongly recommended her to apply to the Society of Dilettanti, for their advice as to the best method of disposing of these precious relics, so as to make them most available to the purposes of science, the illustration of an important period of our history, and the general "diffusion of useful knowledge" in these matters.

Harry was more fortunate; Mrs. Aylmer

was not blue, nor at the moment particularly enamoured of *indigo*, having had the benefit of Mrs. Sowerby's conversation throughout the drive.—She was perfectly overpowered, poor soul, by the tremendous force of learning which had been brought to play on the subject of the encampment, and its collaterals, historical, chronological, numismatic, and vestimentary; and it was a great relief to her to find herself accosted by an individual whose *tournure* spoke more of Almack's than of the British Museum.

"You have had an interesting drive, I hear," said Calverley, as he assisted her to alight from the pony-phaeton.

"So I am told," answered she, with a slight but expressive movement of the shoulders, "*mais que voulez vous? je m'y perds!*—I suppose I have paid the penalty of ignorance; but while the rest of the party were in raptures at their real or fancied discoveries, I could see nothing but an ugly, barren, and

dreary part of the heath, with a few inequalities of ground that were anything but pleasant to a timid person like me, in an open carriage. I was delighted to find myself on the high road again; for Mrs. Sowerby was very near overturning us into a furze bush—I have had quite enough of Roman encampments."

"I am sure, so have I too!" ejaculated Heneage; "whenever I chanced to be in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Sowerby, I thought I was listening to Cæsar's Commentaries."

"Does she often favour you with discussions on military matters?" enquired Calverley.

"Oh, Lord! she talks of every thing; there never was such a proser. But you'll hear her by and by—ten to one, but after dinner she starts off on political economy."

"*Que le Ciel nous en préserve!*" said Mrs. Aylmer; "we had enough of that yesterday. But there is the dressing-bell—*Au revoir, messieurs.*"

CHAPTER V.

On Harry's entrance into the drawing-room before dinner, he had to undergo another ordeal of ceremony, in his formal introduction by Sir Hugh to the assembled party, as the declared candidate and future member for Talkington. The expected hero of a political contest, could not fail to be a character of some interest, especially to the ladies, at a period when the general election had set every brain at work, and every tongue in motion, on the subject of the new parliament and the *matériel* of which it was likely to

be composed; and Harry found himself the object of attentive curiosity and even deference, on the part of his uncle's guests, to a degree far beyond what at any other time he could have expected to command.

The fair sex is peculiarly *impressionable*, as the French say; and Mrs. Sowerby, in spite of her science and philosophy, and Mrs. Aylmer, without any departure from avowed principles, or any reference to systems with which she was pretty enough to dispense, came to the conclusion almost, *au premier coup d'œil*, that so good-looking a person, with so fine a figure, and an air so *distingué*, was decidedly the most eligible guardian to whom the electors of Talkington could entrust the custody of their political rights.

Lady Mary was, it is true, little impressed in his favour, as the remembrance of early feuds with the mother, served to excite a slight feeling of animosity towards the son;—and the loss of her own infant, the long

wished-for,—given only to be snatched away, —was too recent to allow of her viewing with perfect composure, the arrival of one who was destined to succeed to the inheritance which should have been HIS. But Lady Mary, though a foolish, vain, weak woman, was too apathetic for hatred, and too indolent for active malignity. There is a sort of philosophical selfishness which is generally accompanied by a certain degree of passive good-nature, and placability of temper. Strong emotions, whether of love or hate, are disturbing in their effects; and to a person who appreciates the advantages of a quiet life, the annoyance which they produce, is more than commensurate to the gratification resulting from them. Lady Mary had long come to the conclusion that there is little in the feeling of hostility that can compensate the trouble of hating. She had nearly forgotten, and as nearly forgiven, the injuries which had occasioned her *brouillerie* with Mrs. Calverley,

and if no reconciliation had been effected between them, it was because none had been sought by the offending party, and Lady Mary made it a point never to put herself out of her way for anything. Some real and a good deal of imaginary ill health, combined with a due proportion of laziness, had latterly withdrawn her from the more active gaieties of the world, and directed her views of vanity and amusement, to objects attainable at a less expense of locomotion, and more consistent with the *exigences* of a valetudinarian.

To maintain a conspicuous station in the *beau monde* was matter of personal toil and active exertion. She had arrived at that period of life, or state of digestion, when the trouble ceases to be a pleasure. With her advantages of rank and fortune, she knew that she could command *society*, in the more limited sense of the word, and sufficient for all rational purposes, without stirring from

her house, or scarcely from her sofa; and she wisely resigned her pretensions as an active member of the capricious legislature of fashion —the insecure leader of a crowd, in the hope of becoming the centre of a more restricted, but more intellectual circle.

In this she succeeded to a certain extent, and fancying her success to be more decided than it was in reality, she saw no reason to repent the new direction which she had given to her ambition. So perfectly suited to the turn of her mind, and the state of her health was the quasi-literary, quasi-scientific, quasi-political atmosphere in which she now lived, impregnated as it was with just sufficient of the odour of fashionable sanctity, to rescue it from the *mustiness* of *mere intellectualism*, that she became, comparatively, indifferent to the changes which perplex the more stormy social climate in which she had lately flourished; and so absolute was her philosophical tranquillity on the subject, that she would

have heard unmoved the announcement that Mrs. Calverley had been elected a patroness of Almack's,—a dignity which, in Lady Mary's frivolous and unenlightened days, had appeared to her to be the acmé of fashionable distinction.

All danger of rivalry, in that or any other way, was now, however, at an end, as the sun of poor Mrs. Calverley's prosperity had sunk far below the horizon. She was now an object rather of compassion than of envy; and if, as we have said, a slight degree of animosity continued to linger in the mind of Lady Mary towards the connexions of her once-prosperous and arrogant sister-in-law, it was soon dispelled by the influence of Harry's prepossessing appearance and engaging manners.

The exemplary patience with which, on his introduction to her, he listened to the details of all her real or imaginary ailments, and the devoted attention which he appeared to pay to her luminous *exposé* of the homœopathic sys-

tem, served materially to alter the bias of her mind respecting him, and by the time that dinner was announced, if she had not positively taken him into favour, she had certainly ceased to regard him with any thing like hostility.

"So," said Mr. Sowerby, after he had sufficiently relaxed in his gastronomic exertions to allow of his indulging at intervals in a practice which afforded him nearly as much gratification, that of saying disagreeable things; "so I find you are likely to have a very sharp contest for the borough, Sir Hugh."

"You are misinformed, Mr. Sowerby," answered Sir Hugh, rather drily; "my nephew is perfectly sure of his return."

"No such thing, my dear sir, take my word for it; and I have too much regard for your interest not to remind you that—

'It is the curse of fools to be secure;'—

the adverse party are very active, and they

have been first in the field, which is half the battle.—What with the witchery of Lady Belvedere's smiles, and Belvedere's influence over the manufacturing part of the borough—you will have devilish long odds to contend against."

"I bow to your superior information, sir," said Sir Hugh, nearly boiling over, "and, of course, cannot pretend to put my thirty years' knowledge of the borough in competition with your three days' experience of its political feelings; but I shall merely observe, that I will undertake to give you fifty guineas for every frank that Lord Belvedere will write as member for Talkington, in the next parliament."

"Umph! there is an old proverb which I am too polite to mention—but never mind. I won't take advantage of you—you will, I am afraid, be sufficiently out of pocket as it is. A contested election is an expensive amusement."

"What a beautiful woman Lady Belvedere

is," observed Colonel Aylmer; "we met her in our ride to-day."

"Yes," said Sowerby, chiefly with a view of vexing Mrs. Aylmer, who was a *blonde*, by applauding a style of countenance different from hers, "that is what I call a handsome face—there is every thing,—form, character, and expression of the highest class, with eyes and hair that would not disgrace a Georgian; none of your mawkish, insipid, blue-eyed beauties, so common in this country, without a good feature, and nothing to recommend them but a complexion, which, nine times out of ten, is manufactured by Thévenot, or Gattie and Pearce."

"We must excuse our friend Sowerby's Egyptian prejudices and predilections," said Lord Enniscorthy; "he has dwelt so long amongst the tawny tribes of Africa, that he sees no beauty in any woman who is not as swarthy as an Ethiop."

"I should rather say," observed Lady

Mary, "that Mr. Sowerby, in his laborious and invaluable researches, has lived so much among the *dead*, that his eye has lost its accuracy of judgment respecting the *living*."

"Very possibly," rejoined Enniscorthy; "and certainly our friend himself affords some testimony in support of his necrological habits. Physically, as well as morally, we are affected by the atmosphere which surrounds us; and after having passed such a length of time in the catacombs, it is no wonder that he should have become a little *mummi*-fied."

"You do me too much honour," said Sowerby; "but it would be much easier to convert *you* into a mummy than *me*."

"Why so?" enquired Lady Mary.

"I will prove it at once," said Sowerby. "You all know that the most difficult part of the process of *mummification* is the extraction of the brain, through the nose; now I appeal to the company, whether Lord En-

niscorthy's embalmer would have much trouble, in that part of the operation."

"A hit! I do confess it,—a very palpable hit!" exclaimed Enniscorthy, joining heartily in the general laugh which had been raised at his expense.

"Apropos of mummies; were you present at the unrolling of *Damieisi*, in the theatre of the college, last June?" enquired Scalp.

"No!" answered Sowerby; "I was present when they swaddled him, and that was quite enough for me.—He was an old acquaintance of mine."

"Indeed! then it must have been in a former state of existence, and you are a living instance of the transmigration of souls," said Scalp; "the mummy in question is ascertained, beyond a doubt, to be two thousand years old."

"For years, read days," said Sowerby, "and you may be rather nearer the mark; I tell you I knew him personally—he was a sort of scullion in the house of the French

Consul at Cairo; and having died one morning of the cholera, his friends disposed of him to Ali Hamet Budgeri—the Turkish mummy manufacturer, who gets up all these things for the English market. Ali was a particular friend of mine, and, as a great favour, he allowed me to witness the process of embalming, *japanning*, swathing, and so forth. He carries on a brisk trade in the article, and humbugs the European *conoscenti* at a prodigious rate."

"How provoking to be so barbarously undeceived!" exclaimed Mrs. Aylmer; "I have been treasuring up a bit of the cloth in which it was wrapped, as a most precious relic of antiquity."

"Well," said Lady Mary, "I have the laugh against you then; for with as implicit a reliance on its authenticity as you can have had, I contrived to procure a considerable stock of this valuable material, and disposed of it to very great advantage. My friend Lord M—— coaxed the college out of several

yards of it, which he presented to me; I had it embroidered in silver, and made up into reticules by Maradan, all of which I sold for ten guineas a-piece at the fancy bazaar for the benefit of the Polish refugees."

"I suspect my friend Ali Hamet never contemplated the possibility of his manufactures being applied to such pious purposes," said Sowerby; "but had I been quite aware of the *gullibility* of the London public, I think I should have accepted a very handsome offer he made me. He wanted, right or wrong, to make me a present of an old bellows-pipe, undertaking to procure for me the most undeniable testimonials that tradition could supply, of its having been the favourite *tibia* of Ptolemy *Auletes*. He sold it afterwards to some *dilettante* lordling or other, on his travels, and, if I mistake not, it is now in the British Museum."

"What do you say to this, Lord Enniscorthy?"

asked Scalp; "as a family trustee of the Museum, I think your lordship is bound to defend that august body from the charge of excessive gullibility, which Mr. Sowerby has brought against them.

"Why, I believe," said Lord Enniscorthy, "the trustees have gone a good way towards refuting that accusation, by declining the purchase of Mr. Sowerby's own Egyptian antiquities. But the most circumspect of us are off our guard sometimes. By the by, Sowerby, what *has* become of your invaluable collection of copper deities?—*pagods*, I was going to call them: but I believe that is an Indian term."

"It would be a very inappropriate term, here, at all events;" said Scalp; "Sowerby's gods are evidently not *pay*-gods,—as he cannot make money of them."

"I beg your pardon," said Sowerby, "I have long since turned them into cash. I disposed of them to my friend Pigot, the

traveller, who has had them all melted down, and re-cast into a variety of *ancient bronzes*, which he has sold for five hundred pounds to the Society of Antiquaries, as specimens of armour, warranted to have been dug out of the plain of Marathon, and supposed to have belonged to the principal aid-de-camp of Miltiades. If I mistake not, Mr. Scalp, the last number of the ——— Review, contained a long and very learned dissertation in support of their authenticity."

"Really," said Scalp, "I do not recollect; —I am not, I hope, answerable for all the sins of that distinguished periodical."

"I should hope not, indeed;" said Sowerby; "for broad must be the back, and Atlantæan the shoulders, which can sustain the entire weight of its enormities!"

"Nay," rejoined Scalp, "we must not apply to you for its character. The instrument of justice is seldom in high favour with those who are in bodily fear of its exercise,

or who have experienced its severity. It is not from a soldier smarting under the *cat* that we should look for a panegyric on the provost-marshal; nor is an *industriel* hunted by the New Police, expected to indulge in any very pleasing anticipations of the tread-mill."

"Who were those people in the carriage with Lady Belvedere, when we met her to-day?" enquired Colonel Aylmer, anxious to put an end to the wordy war, by directing the conversation into a new channel. "One of them was a remarkably pretty woman."

"I do not know who she is," said Sowerby, "nor do I wish to know. A painted, affected creature!—A remarkably good foil for Lady Belvedere, and that, I suppose, is the reason that we see them together. But the man I *do* know, although he seemed to forget me. It was Colonel Vesey, whom I knew when I was at Madras, five years ago, and whom I have good reason to remember."

"Colonel Vesey!" exclaimed Calverley, as a pang of the most acute description shot through his heart,—while the blood receded from his cheeks. "You are then acquainted with him, Mr. Sowerby? Can you inform me who or what he is?"

"Oh, by all means," said Lord Enniscorthy, "let us have the benefit of your recollections on the subject. No one is such an adept in the art of dissecting a friend; and I am sure the ladies will be grateful for a little oriental scandal."

"The ladies will be disappointed, then, if they expect anything of the sort from me;" said Sowerby. "I know no ill of Colonel Vesey, and if I did, I should be in no particular hurry to enlighten you on the subject. My knowledge of him is confined to this:—he was military secretary to General ——, when that tyrannical old martinet was governor and commander of the forces;—and when that paragon of administrative justice,—that epi-

tome of all the cardinal virtues, thought proper to send me out of the presidency, at four-and-twenty hours' notice, for writing a few paragraphs in a newspaper, commenting on his political proceedings,—I have reason to know that Vesey protested loudly against such an unwarrantable act of despotism, and nearly endangered his own appointment by the energy with which he espoused my cause."

"It must have been the triumph of principle over feeling, then;" whispered Enniscorthy to our hero, who was seated next to him; "for Vesey must be oddly constituted, if he did not think our friend's departure a good riddance."

"Ah, the fact is," said Mrs. Sowerby, "poor Mr. Sowerby's case was a peculiarly hard one; and the more so, as I much fear he was only made the scape-goat for *my* imprudence. Those political articles in the Madras Mercury afforded, I admit, the pretext for his persecution; but I have strong

grounds for believing that, in point of fact, the *real* cause of offence was supplied by some observations which I incautiously made in society, concerning the financial system of the Company,—and some rather severe remarks, which were unfortunately only too applicable, on the state of the currency."

"Pooh, pooh!" said Sowerby, very much annoyed at this attempt to snatch the crown of martyrdom from his brows; "the government, bad as they were, were not quite such idiots as that comes to. The fact is, and there is no use in denying it, those articles in the Mercury hit them hard, and they felt it. But as for the conversation in your *côteries*, you might have gone on talking political economy till doomsday, and nobody would have been the wiser."

"I am sure," said the politico-economical heroine, with a slight toss of the head, "it would be very satisfactory to me, if I could think so. But you must excuse me, my dear

Sowerby,—I am far from pretending to undervalue the immense importance of the press,—that powerful engine of opinion, which has already produced, and will continue to effect, such mighty changes in the moral and physical aspect of the world;—but the influence of social discussion, although less conspicuously manifested, is scarcely less real;—and however you may sneer at the gossip of coteries, it is, after all, the rapid and constant interchange of ideas—the active collision of mind in conversation and argument, which elaborates and develops in action, those very principles which the press has merely presented in a more theoretic and philosophical form to the consideration of thinking men."

At the conclusion of this *tirade*, the inspired Mrs. Sowerby looked proudly around her, with the air of the Pythoness who has just been delivered of an oracle.

"Psha!" muttered her husband, in a tone of the most ineffable disdain;—while the rest

of the company exchanged looks expressive of surprise, admiration, or ridicule, according to their peculiar notions of eloquence and philosophy.

"Talented creature!—superior woman!—masculine understanding," &c., were re-echoed by Lady Mary and her assenting friends, Colonel Aylmer and Mr. Heneage:—the subdued exclamation of "humbug" escaped the lips of Lord Enniscorthy,—and Mrs. Aylmer cast a glance of such comic distress, towards our hero, that his good breeding was severely taxed to preserve a decorous gravity of aspect.

"There is another point of view in which we may also consider it, my dear madam," said Scalp, with a bland smile and a deferential air, "and one which will serve, I think, to strengthen and illustrate your theory. The effect of the press upon the sentiments and opinions of mankind, depends, in a great degree, on the will and pleasure of the indi-

vidual. It requires an act of volition on his part before the intellectual battery can be brought to bear against his powers of reasoning. He need not open the book, or take up the newspaper, unless he thinks proper to make himself acquainted with their contents. But the small shot of conversation assails him in circumstances which admit of no retreat; and conviction may thus force itself on the mind, through unwilling ears, in cases where it would in vain seek admission by the aid of the press, through the more safely guarded channel which the organ of sight supplies;—and I am quite prepared to admit with you, that however influential may be the *pen* of man, acting upon public opinion through the agency of what an ultratory would denominate the *infernal machinery* of the press, and seconded by whole legions of printer's devils,—the *tongue* of woman is, at times, a more formidable instrument—more inevitable in its approaches—more resistless in

its volubility, and more paralysing in its effects."

"If it be so," rejoined Mrs. Sowerby, appropriating with avidity the small proportion of compliment in Scalp's remark, and in her eagerness for display, happily unconscious, or wisely regardless of the sarcasm which it was intended to convey,—"if it be so, it is because the march of mind,—the progressive advancement of the human intellect,—the increasing diffusion of philosophical light, have at length assigned to the female character a station more elevated in the scale of humanity, and functions more worthy of those moral and intellectual powers, which tyranny and prejudice, unauthorized by nature or philosophy, had long sought to brand with the stigma of a degrading inferiority. It is because our sex, roused at length to a sense of their humiliating condition, have ventured to assert their claim to that equality of mind which will, ere long, entitle them to become active

co-operating agents in the great work of civilization;—it is because the monopoly of thought, so long considered as the prescriptive right of the 'lords of the creation,' is gradually yielding, like other venerable abuses, to the regenerating spirit of the age; and the factitious notions, which supported your sex in their fancied elevation, are rapidly vanishing before the light of reason, as the waxen wings of Icarus melted on his too near approach to the orb of day."

"*Brava!* my dear Mrs. Sowerby," said Scalp. "But you might have made that last illustration of yours a little stronger; the analogy is even still closer than you have represented it; for, after all, it is only the difference between *pinions* and *o-pinions*."

"My dear Mr. Scalp," said Lady Mary, laughing, "what a horrid person you are!—to interrupt the current of our ideas, on so interesting a topic too—with a pun! at once de-

handsome and courteous an antagonist, "the spirit of chivalry! Heaven forbid that any thing should remain to us of those barbarous times, when men endeavoured, by trifling and senseless ceremonies of respect, to atone to our sex for the miserable thraldom in which they were really detained,—cajoling us into submission by the toys and gewgaws of outward observance, as a child is coaxed into obedience by sugar-plums!—No, sir!—the spirit of the age"—

"The spirit of the age!" interrupted Sowerby, losing all patience at being so long deprived of the prerogative of speech by the redundant eloquence of his wife, "the spirit of humbug,—of cant,—of twaddle! and as for the age of chivalry,—which, by the by, was little better than an age of highway robbery and pickpocket-ism,—I think the women were very lucky in those days to be coaxed into obedience; for, in spite of the march of mind, and the spirit of intellectual equality, they are

now, and will continue to be, obliged to obey us, without any coaxing at all. And a pleasant world we should have of it, to be sure, if matters were on a different footing!"

"It is certainly no easy task," said Scalp, "to maintain the balance of power between husband and wife;—but, perhaps, Mrs. Sowerby, by way of securing a casting vote in the domestic assembly, would be disposed to allow us the indulgence of a supplemental spouse. With such odds in their favour, the ladies would be sure to carry the day."

"My dear sir," said Lady Mary, "you sadly misunderstand my gifted friend,—(does he not, love?)—in supposing her to advocate an equalization of matrimonial authority, in the vulgar concerns and trivial occurrences of every-day life. It is the intellectual subjection of which she complains;—the mental, and not the physical restraint which she is desirous to abolish.—Is it not so, dear?"

"Undoubtedly, dearest Lady Mary," said

the amazon; "my words, I am sure, will bear no other candid interpretation;—but it is only an additional proof of that spirit of injustice towards our sex, which I may fairly characterize as a remains of barbarism, that gentlemen should perversely construe the claim we advance to intellectual equality, as an attack on that political and social supremacy, which is the natural result of their physical, and not their mental superiority. What we require is, that they should allow us the privilege of thinking and reasoning.—We may aid them by our judgment and advice;—but it must still be theirs to decide, *en dernier ressort*, and act upon their decision."

This most parliamentary explanation,—the spirit of which was perhaps suggested by the *cue* which she had received from Lady Mary, rather than by her own internal conviction, met with very general applause.

"I am delighted," said Lord Enniscorthy, "to hear Mrs. Sowerby qualify her theory,

so as to remove from it every thing which we might be disposed to consider objectionable; for having, in the simplicity of my heart, fallen into the misapprehension of which she complains, as an act of injustice, I was about to plead, in favour of our sex, for an extension to us of some of the privileges hitherto exclusively appertaining to the ladies, in exchange for those rights, from the exercise of which she appeared anxious to relieve us. For example, I meant to suggest, that in the new order of things, the ladies should undertake to do a little of the fighting for us;—that we should be at liberty to loll at our ease on sofas and in britskas, while *they* should be more actively employed in the acquisition of money, by the performance of *our* various professional duties, or in settling the affairs of the state in either house of Parliament. They might also, I thought, concede to us the front seats in an opera-box,—the back

seat in a vis-à-vis,—the easy chair and foot-stool near the fire, &c.,—and, for my own part, I had almost begun to debate with myself, how far, consistently with the new philosophy, I should incur the charge of indelicacy or impropriety, by venturing henceforward to walk down Regent Street to my club, without the protection of a strapping servant-maid behind me, with a red plush petticoat, and a gold headed cane."

"I am sure," said Lady Mary, "as far as a most luxurious addiction to easy-chairs, air-cushions, and lounging sofas—you are already, my dear Enniscorthy, in possession of all the advantages which you contemplate in the new arrangement of things. But Mrs. Sowerby, love, lest we should be suspected of a wish to anticipate the arrival of the period which these gentlemen maliciously represent as our *millennium*, I move that we convince them of our willingness to leave them, at least, in

undisturbed possession of their *convivial* prerogatives, by adjourning to the library. In spite of their sneers, may the day be far distant when it will be their turn to summon *us* to coffee!"

CHAPTER VI.

The day of our hero's arrival at Calverley Hall had been one so full of various, novel, and unexpected excitement, that, on awaking the next morning, he had some difficulty in arranging his scattered ideas, so as to be perfectly sensible of his locality. He felt somewhat like Abon Hassan, astounded by his sudden transformation into the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid, and would have gladly called in the assistance of the little black slave, who convinced the worthy Bagdad merchant of his identity, by biting the tip of his ear.

The sudden alteration of his uncle's sentiments towards him,—his gracious reception by Lady Mary,—his approaching return for the borough, and his re-instalment, as it were, in all the rights of a favoured heir-presumptive, were all subject of separate and collective amazement, which he was very much at a loss to explain, and had still some difficulty in considering as matter of fact.

Yet, after all, there was nothing very mysterious in the whole transaction. We all know:

"What great events from trifling causes spring."

It so happened, that Sir Hugh's family pride —the predominant feature of his mind—having determined him, at all hazards, to return a Calverley for his once hereditary borough, every other consideration naturally gave way to the anxiety he felt for the attainment of that object.

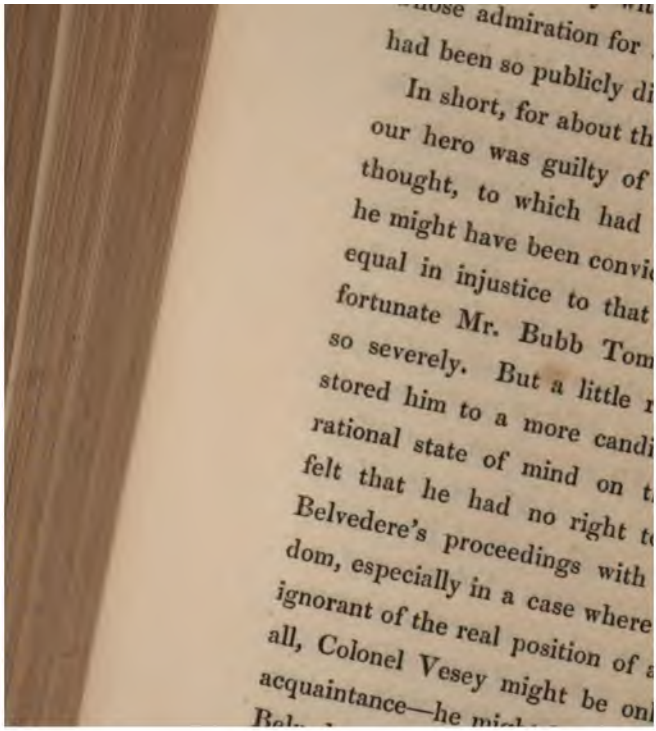
Having so far overcome any remains of former ill-blood—which, indeed, the sudden

death of his brother had naturally tended to remove—as to make decided overtures to his nephew, Sir Hugh felt that he had conceded the whole principle, and at once resolved that the reconciliation should, on his part, be as cordial and complete, as the previous estrangement had been absurd and irrational.

The appearance and deportment of our hero, in his first interview with his uncle, were very well calculated to strengthen Sir Hugh's determination on the subject, as the baronet had good taste, good feeling, and, above all, dignity of character sufficient to appreciate the degree of reserve, and the independence of tone, which Harry had maintained on that occasion.

But there were other circumstances connected with his present position, for which Harry had been even still less prepared, and which increased, in no small degree, the catalogue of his perplexities. He had not been prepared to find Lady Belvedere a con-

spicuous partizan of his opponent, and actively engaged in his canvass; still less could he have anticipated that the mysterious Colonel Vesey, whose sudden intimacy with her had already excited so much jealous conjecture in his mind, should have progressed so far in her good graces, as to be regularly established as one of her guests at Belvedere Abbey. Although seriously annoyed at the part she was about to take in the election, Harry could not be said to feel absolutely jealous of Lord Belvedere, for whom he had good reason to believe that she felt no particular partiality; although his chivalrous interference in defence of her character, had invested him with a claim on her good offices, which common gratitude would not fail to urge on the present occasion. But Colonel Vesey! what could bring *him* there? What claim could he have upon her attentions; or how could she have been induced to extend her hospitality to him at such a moment? It was very extraordinary!



he was so much older than the lovely widow, it seemed highly improbable that she should view him with any particular favour. To be sure, a man of five-and-forty, especially if he have rank and fortune, is not positively too old for any woman;—but Lady Belvedere had married one elderly man already, and there are very few ladies so circumstanced, by whom, Sir John Denham's dying request to his wife, would not be looked upon as a very superfluous injunction.

However, upon all subjects, where so little is positively known, conjecture is unprofitable,

"And thinking but a useless waste of thought."

So Harry determined, like a Committee of the House of Lords, to postpone his decision, until such time as farther evidence could be procured, and joined the breakfast party with a serene aspect, and an appetite more in accordance with his hopes than his fears.

Although Sir Hugh did not entertain a

doubt as to the successful result of the contest, he deemed it advisable that the new candidate should exhibit a decorous regard for the honorary independence of the electors, by going through the usual form of a canvass; and as the nomination was fixed for the next day, it was necessary for him to take the field as early as possible. Accordingly he set out immediately after breakfast, accompanied by Sir Hugh's solicitor, as electioneering *cicerone* and legal adviser, and Mr. Heneage, as volunteer *attaché* to the canvass; the latter gentleman having taken a great fancy to our hero, whose general air, manner, and style of dress were such as to win the applause of all juvenile *aspirans* to social distinction, who had been fortunate enough to acquire correct notions and principles on these most important points.

We do not propose to follow Harry through the tedious operations of the morning;—to enumerate all the fat women he was obliged to

ogle—and all the brawny hands he was fain to shake. Fortunately for him, he could afford to confine himself to general expressions of patriotism, and indefinite protestations of attachment to the principles of freedom. The electors of Talkington were still so far behind their age in politics, that no idea of distinct pledges had yet entered their unsophisticated minds. In spite of the excitement which the discussion of the Reform Bill had naturally produced in the borough, the "march of intellect" had not been sufficiently rapid amongst its worthy denizens, to hurry them as far in their political aspirations, as the majority of their brother electors throughout the kingdom. The manufacturing interest, indeed, which might include about a third of the constituency, was gradually yielding to discontent, in consequence of the falling off in the demand for the chief product of their industry; and although by the uninitiated, this circumstance might naturally be attributed to the caprice of

fashion, which displays its taste in the selection of silks, linens, or cottons, without any particular reference to constitutional principles, the philosophers of the party would no doubt have succeeded in tracing the mysterious connexion that exists between the restoration of a declining branch of trade, and the establishment of annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot, had not the Belvedere influence, which, as we have already stated, was paramount among the manufacturers, served to counterbalance the natural tendency of their minds, and keep the revolutionary spirit in check.

In Mr. Salmon, the principal fishmonger of the town, who received him with great courtesy, Harry had the pleasure to recognise his fellow-traveller of the preceding day; and that worthy person, anxious to obliterate from the mind of the new candidate, all doubts respecting his loyalty to the house of Calverley, which he might have entertained in con-

sequence of Mr. Salmon's unceremonious remarks on Sir Hugh's political conduct, begged as a particular favour, that his name might be added to the committee, which had started most miraculously into existence, for the purpose of carrying on the election of our hero: a request which was of course graciously conceded.

The business of the morning went off most satisfactorily; and having made the requisite round of visits, with every prospect of success, Harry was cantering homewards in high spirits, accompanied by his electioneering "staff," when, as they passed the Park entrance of Belvedere Abbey, a low phaeton, drawn by two beautiful white ponies, and driven by a lady, issued from the gates, and our hero suddenly found himself confronted with the lovely viscountess and her vivacious friend Miss Caryl.

Politics, party, and parliament, were all forgotten. With one bound of his horse, Harry

was by the side of the pony-chaise, and Lady Belvedere, checking her milk-white steeds, and blushing as becomingly as possible, held out her hand to him.

"I am almost ashamed to see you," said Harry. "Can you forgive me for coming forward as the opponent of *your* candidate?"

"Oh," answered she, laughing, "there is no apology necessary; or perhaps *I* ought to apologize to you. But I must say that I never heard of your intention to start for the borough until this morning."

"Nor had I the slightest idea, until yesterday, I can most solemnly assure you," said Harry, "that you were in any degree interested in the result of the contest. In fact, I did not know that you were at the abbey."

"Well, well," said she, "we will be generous enemies. Zeal for the honour of our respective families, must serve as our motto and excuse. But I promise not to quarrel with you, if you succeed. Being here, you

know, I could not refuse to canvass for my gallant cousin, who has so recently broken lance in my cause."

"Would he had broken his neck!" thought Calverley. "That assurance of pardon," said he, "is more gratifying to me than all the senatorial honours which the constituency of Talkington can bestow. I had hoped as much —for, after all, Lord Belvedere is not '*le père de Chimène.*'"

"No, nor her husband either," giggled Miss Caryl, who had some little penetration, and not a little *malice*, in the French sense of the word: "But it is rather too bad of you to transform yourself into the *Cid* at such a moment, Captain Calverley. For my part, I think you are a shocking person, to oppose poor dear Lord Belvedere's election, when we thought we had it all our own way so nicely. By the by, what *are* your colours? Ours are blue and silver."

"Really, that is more than I can tell you,"

said Harry; "I believe Lady Mary and her friends were about to form themselves into a committee of taste on the subject, when I started this morning on my canvass."

"Do you think you have a good chance?" enquired Lady Belvedere, with a slight degree of eagerness that spoke more of hope than fear. "But, perhaps," added she, "that is an indiscreet question?"

"Lady Belvedere can propose no question that I could decline to answer," replied Harry. "I have only to say, that were it not for your opposition, I should be sanguine. But when the cause of my adversary can boast of such support ——"

"I see how it is," interrupted she; "you are perfectly secure of your return."

"If you say so, I accept it as an omen," said he. "But whatever may be the result of the contest, I trust I may be permitted to pay my respects to you at the abbey."

"Oh, certainly!" said Lady Belvedere;

"the election once over, I have done with political feuds. But for the present, you know, we are mortal foes. So I must wish you good morning; otherwise your friends will be suspicious of our long conference, and imagine that you are betraying them to the enemy."

So saying, with a friendly bow, she drove on; and Harry, looking rather foolish, rejoined his party. But they had not proceeded far, when the out-rider, who followed Lady Belvedere's phaeton, was heard galloping very fast behind them; and riding up to our hero, he said:

"Her ladyship wishes to speak to you, sir."

Harry clapped spurs to his horse, and in one moment was again "alongside" of the phaeton.

"Oh, Captain Calverley," said Lady Belvedere, with some appearance of embarrassment, "I beg your pardon for calling you back; but I just wanted to mention——you and Lord Belvedere are not, I am afraid, on very cordial

terms." (She blushed deeply as she spoke.) "You are now about to encounter each other as political opponents. I do not know how far I am authorized to give a caution on such a subject; but when you meet on the hustings—I trust—I hope—that electioneering opposition will not be made the pretext for personal disagreement. You will, I am sure, promise me, that, as far as you are concerned, there shall be no danger of any such contingency. I ask it as a favour—for your own sake—for mine also," added she, in a much lower tone, so as to be inaudible to Miss Caryl.

It cannot be denied, that Lady Belvedere's caution might be interpreted as proceeding from anxiety for the safety of his lordship, quite as much as for that of our hero. But although Harry was not remarkable for vanity, there were certain slight indications of feeling on the part of her ladyship, during this short interview, which prompted him secretly to

monopolize the compliment, and his heart beat with no unpleasing emotion, as he answered, with well-feigned calmness :

" Your wishes will always be commands to me : but, in the present instance, I can assure you that your apprehensions are groundless. I feel no personal hostility towards Lord Belvedere, nor do I imagine that he entertains any such feelings with regard to me. You may, however, rest perfectly satisfied, that, if the strictest care on my part, to avoid the use of irritating language, can avert the unpleasant consequences which you think likely to result from our contest, the victory, on whichever side it may be, shall be bloodless. I will take every means, consistent with my honour, to avoid a *brouillerie*."

" Oh, pray do, now! Captain Calverley," interposed Miss Caryl, " because, if either of you were to be shot, it would be so shocking! To be sure, mamma says, that in Ireland, in her time (mamma was a Fitzgerald,

you know), an election was considered to go off very flat, without a duel or two to enliven it."

"My dear Julia!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere; "how can you talk of such barbarous times and proceedings! You will destroy all the effect of my exhortations."

"Oh, n'importe," said Calverley, laughing. "I can obey your ladyship, and still gratify Miss Caryl's heroical predilections. I have promised not to fight Lord Belvedere, if I can avoid it. But if Miss Caryl is particularly desirous that the insipidity of the election should be corrected and seasoned by a little gunpowder, I shall have much pleasure in fighting any body else, whom she may think proper to recommend as a fit object for such polite attentions."

"Oh, you are a shocking person! Go away, do! I will have nothing more to say to you, if you are so sarcastic," answered the lively Julia. "Come, my dear Lady Bel, we must

really not hold any longer parley with the enemy."

"*A l'honneur, Mesdames,*" said Calverley, as he rode off and rejoined his party, who were not a little puzzled to divine the nature of the communication that had been going on between the rival factions. But Harry was not very solicitous to enlighten them on the subject; and as the degree of intimacy that subsisted between his companions and himself, did not authorize any direct enquiry on their part, they were obliged to restrain their curiosity as best they might.

CHAPTER VII.

It may here, perhaps, be not amiss to explain to the reader, the exact state of things at Belvedere Abbey, concerning which he may possibly feel some curiosity. For this purpose, it will be necessary for our narrative to retrace its steps a little; and we must go back to the period of that interview between our heroine and Colonel Vesey, the most important particulars of which, we deemed it expedient to withhold for a time.

It will be recollected, that Mrs. Norcliffe had also been kept completely in the dark, as

to the result of that conference; but although the spirit of investigation had been somewhat unfairly roused within her, by a species of *demi-confidence*, before, in point of fact, there was anything to confide,—she had too implicit a reliance on the good sense of Lady Belvedere, to doubt for a moment that there was a substantial cause for her silence; and although, under the circumstances, it was impossible not to feel curious, she discreetly forbore to be inquisitive. She was, however, rather startled to hear that the colonel's communication was of so important a nature, as to make it necessary, for its satisfactory development, that Lady Belvedere should give him an invitation to the abbey;—and she ventured to remonstrate in strong terms against what she conceived to be a gratuitous and rather reprehensible extension of the duties of hospitality. But our heroine quieted her alarm on the subject, by assuring her that the contemplated visit was not likely to extend beyond a few hours,—that

it was, moreover, contingent on her obtaining such proofs of the colonel's respectability, as might enable her to feel perfectly secure in receiving him under her roof; and, finally, that she relied upon Mrs. Norcliffe's friendship, to remove all doubt as to the propriety of such a proceeding, by affording to her the countenance and protection of her presence, during Lady Belvedere's autumnal visit to the abbey.

To this proposal, Mrs. Norcliffe was at first inclined to demur, being unwilling to exchange her own quiet, easy, and independent mode of life, for the more elaborate and irksome edition of London society, so often found in a great house in the country,—where people, instead of being unfettered in their movements, and suffered to enjoy the calm tranquil pleasures of rural existence, are doomed to be *en représentation* from morning till night, and debarred of the inestimable privilege of being sick, silent, or sulky, as often, and at such time, as to them may seem fit.

But when, in addition to this threatened visit of our mysterious colonel, Mrs. Norcliffe found that the cloistered privacy of the abbey was likely to be invaded by Lord Belvedere, to whom his fair cousin could scarcely avoid offering a temporary abode in his own hereditary *château*, on the occasion of the ensuing election, and when she reflected on the difficulties which the extreme youth, great beauty, and isolated position of Lady Belvedere, combined to produce in the regulation of her conduct as the head of such an establishment, she no longer hesitated to sacrifice her feelings of indolence or philosophy to the respectability of her friend; and although the society of Miss Julia Caryl, who was to be of the party, did not, in Mrs. Norcliffe's eyes, add much to the *agrément* of the prospect, she acceded to our heroine's request, and prepared to accompany her into ——shire.

In the mean time, before the ladies left London, they had many opportunities of

forming a more accurate estimate of Colonel Vesey's character, by meeting him in such society as at once set their minds at rest on the score of his respectability; and it was agreed, that on the colonel's return from Dublin, whither he was about to proceed for a short time, he should direct his course to Belvedere Abbey, for the purpose which we shall not fail to declare in due season.

But even with so correct a chaperon as Mrs. Norcliffe, to watch over her proceedings, and direct her conduct, Lady Belvedere could not decorously receive gentlemen *en visite chez elle*, without some *male* friend or connexion, who might take the foot of the table, and preside over the symposial mysteries which are diurnally celebrated at the festive board, after the retirement of the ladies. The domestic circle of the abbey was therefore enlivened by the presence of the Hon. Oswald Tyringham, whom we have already had occasion to mention as the ex-

member for Talkington, and who, being uncle to our heroine's late husband, and quite old enough to be her own grandfather, was fully competent to perform, with all due decorum, the important duties which he so obligingly undertook. He was a quiet, easy, dosy, good sort of man, with a good stomach, and its usual accompaniment—an even temper. He was very obliging in all matters that did not require him to put himself out of his way; and had even no insurmountable objection to a little responsibility, provided it were not attended with much trouble. He was always on the best possible terms with Lady Belvedere, for whom he entertained quite as much affection as if she had been one of his own family; which, however, was not saying a great deal—as his tenderest sympathies were exclusively devoted to the pleasures of the table; his heart was chiefly fixed on gastronomic enjoyments,—*animus erat in patinis*, and he viewed with a calm, placid,

and philosophic indifference, all the events and casualties to which this slippery world is liable, unless they happened to interfere with the indulgence of this his ruling passion. It was seldom, however, a *passion malheureuse*, for he was in sufficiently affluent circumstances to ensure him a satisfactory *menu* at home, and he lived on terms of the most familiar and cordial intimacy with the most distinguished *Amphitryons* of the day. Thus he could afford to study the theory and practice of his favourite science, without being classed among those *qui mangent leur bien*. Lady Belvedere's character and conduct were such as won his esteem, her establishment and society were in tolerable conformity with his tastes and habits; but above all, her *chef de cuisine* suited him in an eminent degree; and the skill of Mons. Beaurepas was, in his mind, like charity which "covereth a multitude of sins."

Under these circumstances, he accepted

with great alacrity her invitation to the abbey, and was duly installed in his office of *provisional* host, in time to receive his nephew, Lord Belvedere, when he arrived on his electioneering visit.

The necessity of his lordship's reception at the abbey, was a source of some annoyance to our heroine, who had guessed with tolerable accuracy, the motive of his assiduities, and would gladly have discouraged them, in any manner that might have been consistent with her notions of courtesy. But as we have said, he was guarded in his conduct and language;—constantly adverting to the *relationship*, which afforded him a fair pretext for the tone of friendly familiarity that he assumed towards her, and never carrying his complimentary enthusiasm in her presence, beyond the bounds of legitimate *persiflage*. There was one of the party, however, who hailed his arrival with feelings of considerable satisfaction. Miss Caryl was by no means insen-

sible to the combined recommendations of rank, wealth, and a handsome person, which ensured to Lord Belvedere so flattering a reception in society. She viewed his character with that amiable indulgence usually exhibited by the fair sex, towards the *travers* of bachelors with five-and-twenty thousand a-year. His coxcombry was in her eyes, but a graceful and becoming air of refinement,—his conceit and self-confidence passed for *disinvoltura,* his flippancy for wit, his caprice and egotism, for the eccentricities of genius.

Although his attentions to her had never exceeded the average amount of homage which he considered due from a man of his chivalrous pretensions, to every woman on the sunny side of forty, still she did not despair of conquest. She flattered herself that by dint of all those little delicate proofs of regard which a young lady is authorized to bestow upon a young gentleman, without absolutely subjecting herself to the imputation of for-

wardness, she might ultimately, and gradually, gain possession of that well fortified heart, which was evidently impregnable by open assault. She knew, by instinct probably, for she was but slightly addicted to observation, reasoning, or analysis, that even the most callous and obdurate of the sex are assailable through their vanity;—that dangerous but comfortable quality, the source of so much mortification, and of so many enjoyments,—at once the bane and antidote of human happiness—leading its possessor into so many scrapes, and supplying him with so vast a fund of consolation under all mischances. Once contrive to reduce this important, and generally, most weakly defended outwork,—and the day is your own;—it is the key of the citadel, and sooner or later, the garrison must surrender at discretion.

But the too-confident Julia, had overlooked one very material fact connected with the theory on which she built her hopes. Al-

though the heart of every man may be assailable through his vanity, the success of any given attack upon this vulnerable point, depends greatly on the nature and calibre of the artillery which is brought to bear against it, as well as on the skill of the hand employed in its direction. Flattery is an engine of conquest, powerful indeed, if judiciously managed, but the form and application of which must vary according to the object which it assails. It must be fashioned by good taste, and regulated by judgment. It can be moulded to any shape, and is susceptible of every modification;—but to be effective, its approaches must be unsuspected—its real character disguised;—and although it is a weapon most frequently and successfully directed against fools, the true art of wielding it is not to be acquired without some share of wisdom.

But Lord Belvedere, although a coxcomb, was by no means a fool; and Miss Caryl's rate

of intellect was not such as to give her the necessary advantage over him, in the prosecution of her matrimonial designs. He was not long in perceiving her drift, and had set her down in the tablets of his mind, as a person towards whom it would be necessary to behave with great caution, lest she should take it into her head to fall desperately in love with him;—a result which he considered more inconvenient than agreeable, under all the circumstances of the case.

He was therefore not a little *contrarié* to find her established as one of the family party at the abbey. But the presence of Mrs. Norcliffe was perhaps a still greater annoyance to him; for that worthy lady had little relish for his airs of superlative refinement, and less mercy on their display, whenever they happened to trench on her own peculiar notions. —She was a systematic *puppy-cide*,—delighting in the extermination of a coxcomb,—and remorseless as a slave-driver in the infliction

of the lash, whenever she considered that its application might produce a wholesome effect on the delinquent.

The society at the abbey, was thus composed of rather heterogeneous materials;—but as the subject of the election furnished a common point of occupation, if not of interest, to all, they contrived to go on together in tolerable harmony.

Although the family seats of the two rival houses were situated so close to each other, Lady Belvedere had hitherto had no intercourse with Sir Hugh and Lady Mary Calverley.—She had never resided at the abbey during the life of her husband, who was much more partial to his place in the north, the position of which was better calculated for all sporting purposes. Since his death, she had only passed one autumn at the abbey, during which the Calverleys were on the continent; and Lady Mary, having, as we stated in the last chapter, withdrawn herself a good deal

from general society, it so happened that they had never met in London.

Certain "pasteboard" courtesies had recently been exchanged *de part et d'autre*, since Lady Belvedere's arrival in ——shire; but the political opposition which had now sprung up between the two houses, effectually checked, for the present, all approach to farther intimacy.

It was about two or three days before the period of Harry's arrival at Calverley Hall, that Lady Belvedere was seated alone in her morning room; the gentlemen having as usual driven into Talkington, to work their interest with the electors,—and Mrs. Norcliffe and Julia being engaged in a morning's walk round the shrubbery, when a travelling chariot drove up to the abbey, and Colonel Vesey was ushered into the presence of our heroine.

"I am here, according to my promise," said he.

"And I have not forgotten mine," said

Lady Belvedere, "although, to tell you the truth,—this is not the most convenient moment for the examination of matters so vitally interesting to one or both of us. I am in the midst of a political *tourbillon*. But I am not going to suggest a postponement," continued she, smiling.

"It is my wish and my pleasure to consult your ladyship's convenience in every way," said the colonel. "I was apprehensive that my visit might be ill-timed; as I believe I am rather sooner in this part of the world than I expected to be. But at all events, it was not my intention to claim the performance of your promise to-day. I am now on my way to my cousin Lord Glanmire's, where I shall remain till the day after to-morrow. On my return, I shall do myself the honour of calling here, to ascertain whether you can favour me with my promised audience. But in the meantime, as I am requiring you to give me a mark of confidence, it is just that I should furnish you

with every proof in my power, that your confidence is not misplaced. You have heard the outline of my story, and the facts which it contains are of such a nature as to induce you to promise a communication of certain occurrences connected with your own history, which, if I understood your ladyship aright, are unknown even to most of your intimate friends. In taking such a step, you cannot of course proceed upon slight grounds; nor would I have it said, as a gentleman and a soldier, that I availed myself of any doubtful or imaginary coincidence to entrap your ladyship into a disclosure which you might subsequently regret,—and which, personally, I could have no right to demand.—I have therefore," continued he,—producing a packet, " drawn up a detailed statement of the facts to which I have alluded, and I here submit it to your perusal,—in the full assurance that you will find in it additional grounds for honouring me with that confidence which I am so anxious

to obtain,—and which, whatever may be the result as to my hopes or wishes, I trust you will never see cause to regret having reposed in me. On my part, I am entrusting your ladyship with a secret that deeply concerns the honour of my family; but I rely implicitly on your discretion, and feel that I am safe in your hands."

"Colonel Vesey," said our heroine, "I acknowledge the delicacy, and appreciate the motives of your conduct in this instance; but before you give that packet out of your possession,—I think it my duty to tell you, that as to what may pass between us for the future, I cannot bind myself to that strict secrecy which I promised to maintain, and which I have hitherto maintained, respecting the statements which you made to me at our first interview.—You must consider, colonel, that I am in a peculiar and very delicate position. Alone as it were in the world, and left entirely to my own guidance, at an age when

most of my sex are wholly dependant on the will of others, I am naturally most anxious, in the management of every important matter, to secure the sanction of wiser heads and more mature judgments than my own. You will acknowledge that the affair in question cannot be considered trivial, or unimportant. It is one which highly interests my feelings, and may possibly, affect in a very material degree, my future destiny. Under these circumstances, I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of acting without the advice and approbation of those on whose prudence I can firmly rely. I have promised to produce for your inspection the duplicate of the miniature which you showed me, as well as another which I have in my possession, and which may perhaps serve in some degree as a clue to your farther researches. I will also furnish you with an explanation of the manner in which they came into my hands. But I have come to the conclusion that these disclosures

must be made in presence of a third party, whose judgment may direct me as to any farther steps that it may be expedient for me to take in the affair, and whose station and character may sanction a proceeding, that might be the occasion of censure or misrepresentation, were it wholly clandestine. The person I have selected for the purpose, is my friend Mrs. Norcliffe, whom you have seen; I am determined to be governed by her advice in this business; but before she can be competent to act as my counsellor, it will be necessary that she should be put in possession of the principal facts of the case.—I shall not therefore receive your statement, unless with the understanding that I am at liberty to communicate it to her. This you are unwilling to concede—but I appeal to yourself, colonel—to your feelings of candour—to your sense of propriety as a gentleman—had you a daughter—or a sister," (Colonel Vesey started)

circumstanced as I am, could you be satisfied if she were to act otherwise?"

"No—no—no!" exclaimed Vesey, after a short pause, during which, he seemed much agitated; "You are right—and though it certainly is in the highest degree painful to me, to make an uninterested stranger the depositary of a distressing family secret, as I cannot but acknowledge the justice of your remonstrance, I will at once accede to your terms. I am but very slightly acquainted with Mrs. Norcliffe, but—no matter! she is your ladyship's most intimate friend,—and I am bound to believe that she is worthy to be trusted. There is the packet,—I abandon it to your discretion."

"And I solemnly promise," said Lady Belvedere, as she received it, "that to Mrs. Norcliffe alone shall its contents be communicated by me,—until such time as you may authorise me to extend the knowledge of them to my other friends.—I shall then expect to see

you here the day after to-morrow,—and you may rely upon it, that no other engagement of pleasure or business, shall interfere with our farther investigation of this affair."

"Well then, madam," said Vesey, "for the present, I will take my leave."

"If you must go;—but when you return, I trust that you will not be in such a hurry to leave the abbey. We are a small, but I think you will find, rather an agreeable party; and if you are disposed to favour us with your society for a few days, I am sure my uncle, Mr. Tyringham, and my cousin, Lord Belvedere, will be much gratified by such an addition to our circle. With the former, you are, I believe, already acquainted."

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Tyringham frequently in London, since my return from India:" said Vesey; "I am grateful for your kindness,—and may possibly tax your hospitality for four-and-twenty hours,—should it not be inconvenient."

So saying, he bowed and withdrew, and Lady Belvedere, as soon as the sound of his carriage-wheels on the gravel, had given notice of his departure, betook herself without delay to the privacy of her *boudoir*, where, having secured herself from intrusion by bolting the door—she proceeded to open the mysterious and important packet. Should the reader, as we sincerely hope, share her curiosity with respect to its contents, we beg leave to refer him to the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

NARRATIVE OF COLONEL VESEY.

"To the Viscountess Belvedere.

"It is not necessary to trouble you with many particulars concerning my family. My father was the second son of Lord Glanmire; he bore the rank of Major in the —th foot, and lost his life in the service of his king and country, in the memorable and fatal affair of Corunna, leaving his widow and two children but very scantily provided for. My mother's straitened circumstances not allowing her to live in England, or to conduct the education

of her children on a scale suited to their birth, I was withdrawn from Eton, where I had been placed eighteen months previously, and we retired to a very small property, in the north of Ireland, which, with the exception of my mother's pension, as the widow of a field-officer, supplied our only means of subsistence. It might be supposed that a remote corner of the county Donegal was not a spot favourable to the development of those qualities, or the cultivation of those manners and talents, which form an accomplished and elegant female. But what was wanting in regular and systematic tuition in the education of my sister, was amply compensated by the daily example of sweetness, amiability, and refinement, which the society of my mother afforded; and the unremitting attention with which that exemplary parent directed the studies, and watched over the expanding mind of her daughter, was far more valuable than all the superficial precepts, and school-room discipline

which the most accomplished governess could bestow.

"Few persons, indeed, could be better qualified than my mother to superintend the progress of a daughter from infancy to womanhood. By birth a Howard, she had all the dignity of character and elevation of sentiment which so well accorded with the nobility of her descent. Her mind was highly cultivated, her manners elegant and prepossessing, and in her youth she must have been strikingly beautiful. It is not surprising that, under the care of such a parent, in spite of certain disadvantages of position, my sister Geraldine grew up one of the most angelic and captivating beings that ever graced society. Nature had made her lovely in person, and maternal culture had successfully laboured to improve those qualities of head and heart, which from her earliest infancy had made her the idol of her family. She was my only sister—we were twins—and the ardent affection that subsisted

between us was such as naturally resulted from so near and sacred a connexion. Words are not competent to express the devoted love—the pride and admiration—the species of worship with which I regarded her.

"Throughout the whole range of human sympathies, there is not one feeling more pure, more holy, or more delightful than the love of a brother towards a sister; and those who have been in circumstances nearly similar to mine, when in the restricted circle of family affection, my heart clung to the only being on whose tenderness and regard I could calculate in my progress through life, as the declining state of my mother's health plainly indicated that we could not reckon on her prolonged existence—those who have experienced the strength of that tie, with which simultaneous birth, constant and exclusive association from the cradle, similarity of thought, disposition, and feeling, as far as is consistent with difference of sex, may be said to bind our heart

to another, can alone appreciate the happiness that I enjoyed in her society, or the blight that fell on my hopes and prospects, from the fatal catastrophe which I have undertaken to record. Four-and-twenty years of bodily toil, of mental exertion, of active enterprise, have gone over my head since I last beheld her; but the memory of her virtues and her affection—my grief for her loss—my anxiety to ascertain her fate—and my ardent thirst for vengeance on her destroyer, are as fresh, as poignant, almost as maddening, as the day when the hateful intelligence reached me that my fraternal hopes were blasted—my mother sinking broken-hearted into the grave—and my father's house dishonoured!

"From my early boyhood, I felt a strong vocation for a military life, and as my mother had neither interest to procure me a commission in the king's service, nor money to secure my promotion had it once been obtained, she saw no means of indulging my

love for the career of arms, but that of sending me to India in the Company's service. She was the only child of a younger brother; and although she had never quarrelled with her father's family, her long residence in Ireland, and perhaps the great disparity of fortune, had produced a sort of estrangement between herself and the elder branches of her noble and influential house. My claims on the reigning Lord Glanmire, who was my father's first cousin, were also but slight; nor had he indeed, the power of advancing my interests very materially in any way. But my mother was fortunate enough to have a distant relative, a Scotchman, in the East India direction. To him she applied, and, with the characteristic liberality and warm-heartedness of a nation, by whom the claims of kindred, however remote, are never disregarded, Mr. Mac Intyre not only placed a cadetship at once at my disposal, but procured for me a presentation to the Military College.

"Warmly attached as I was to my mother and sister, it was not without many a pang that I made up my mind to enter on a career that would necessarily banish me to so great a distance from them; but the love of warlike adventure was strong within me, and with the sanguine confidence of youth, I thought of the eastern clime in which I was destined to pass the better part of my life, as a region abounding in wealth, and presenting innumerable avenues to fame and fortune, which could not fail to reward the exertion of courage and industry. The hope of contributing to the comfort of my mother's declining years, and realizing an independence for my beloved sister, sustained my spirits, and made me look on the approaching separation with more cheerful feelings than might have been expected.

"I went through the usual course of study at Addiscombe, and before I had completed my nineteenth year, the period fixed for my

departure to the east, arrived. But two months were to elapse between the time of my quitting the military college and my embarkation for Madras. This was but a short respite; and, being anxious to devote as much of it as possible to my mother and sister, I set out for the county Donegal immediately after passing my final examination.

"The small and retired village, near which they lived, was so far remote from the habitations of the gay and the opulent, that any thing like society in the usual acceptation of the term was quite out of the question. My mother's character and connexions ensured her the respect and obtained for her the periodical attentions of the surrounding nobility and gentry; but as there was not within five miles, any other dwelling of even moderately aristocratic pretensions, however friendly might be the disposition of her wealthy neighbours and acquaintance, it was impossible for her to keep up a very frequent intercourse

with any of them. Thus the inmates of Willow Cottage were generally left to their own resources for amusement and society during the greater part of the year. But the regular and healthful habits of a country life, the recreation of books and music, and the discharge of numberless offices of charity and kindness, which even their limited means enabled them to perform towards the poor and destitute, but simple and virtuous inhabitants of the neighbouring village, usually sufficed to employ their days in content and cheerfulness, and to banish the demon of ennui, perhaps more effectually than a regular routine of courtly dissipation.

"Accustomed as I was to their retired mode of life, and unused to find the domestic circle broken in upon by the presence of strangers, except when Father Magrath, the village pastor, would occasionally look in on a winter's evening—for the enjoyment of a cup of tea, and a quiet game at chess with my

mother, — I was not a little surprised on arriving at the cottage, about ten o'clock at night, to find an addition to the family party, in the person of a very good-looking and elegantly dressed man, about thirty years of age, who seemed regularly established as an intimate friend, and a welcome guest at the tea-table.

"As soon as the joy of my mother and sister, at my arrival, had sufficiently subsided to enable them to attend to matters of ceremony, the stranger was introduced to me by the former, as Mr. Clarges, an English gentleman who had taken up his abode for a short time at Clonrennan,—tempted by the beautiful scenery which surrounded the village, and which, as an enthusiastic amateur sketcher, he was peculiarly qualified to enjoy. Nothing could be more gentleman-like than his appearance, or more engaging than his manners; and he certainly exerted himself to the utmost, in that first interview, to in-

gratiate himself as much with me, as he had apparently done with the other members of the family.

"I was not long in discovering, however, that the charms of inanimate nature, were not the sole attraction that induced him to prolong his residence at the small, quiet, and uncomfortable village of Clonrennan. His admiration of my sister was evident, and betrayed itself, as it were unconsciously, in every word, look, and action, during that evening. I was rather alarmed, also, to observe a certain timid constraint of manner towards him, on the part of Geraldine, more indicative of her consciousness, than her dislike of his attentions. But these ideas might be the work of imagination, and the result of that anxious interest for the happiness of those we love, that makes us unnecessarily suspicious and absurdly susceptible where they are concerned.

"At length Mr. Clarges having taken his leave, for the night, I had an opportunity of enquiring who he was, and what extraordinary circumstance had all at once produced so close an intimacy between him and the family.

"The answers which my mother returned to my enquiries, were not altogether satisfactory to me; as they proved, that in point of fact, she knew very little about him, and that she had scarcely any authority but his own, for the statements he made concerning his birth and fortune. He described himself as a young English lawyer, who was endeavouring to dispose of the long vacation, by a picturesque tour through Ireland. His portfolio certainly bore testimony to the truth of this part of his story; as it was well filled with sketches and views of the most striking scenery through which he had passed. His family, he said, was ancient and honourable, long resident in Devonshire, in the enjoyment

of a considerable property, to which he was heir-presumptive; and in the meantime, he was preparing to practise at the bar.

"He had been first introduced to the notice of the family by Father Magrath, on whom he had called shortly after taking up his abode at the inn of Clonrennan, on pretence of making some enquiries concerning the objects of interest in the neighbourhood. The worthy priest, who in his secluded parish, had few opportunities of associating with persons of education and refinement, was quite delighted with the good sense, amiable manners, and extensive information of his new acquaintance. He found in Mr. Clarges an excellent classical scholar, an accomplished modern linguist, and an antiquarian of no mean pretensions. He seemed even wonderfully well skilled in controversy, for a layman, and they had many long and earnest arguments on the comparative merits of their respective creeds, which were always conducted,

on the part of Clarges, with so much mildness and moderation, that they only served to increase the respect and regard of the good father for so amiable an antagonist.

"As Magrath had a strong feeling for the picturesque, some knowledge of drawing, and a general taste for the fine arts, which had been much cultivated during a residence of a few years in Italy, he was fully qualified to perform the office of *cicerone,* in directing the attention of the stranger to the beauties of nature by which they were surrounded. Thus, from an apparent similarity of tastes, feelings, and pursuits, they became in a short time, extremely intimate; and whatever moments could be spared from his pastoral avocations, were usually passed by Father Magrath in the society of his new friend.

"As soon as he had been enabled, by constant intercourse during three weeks or a month, to form a decided, and as he flattered himself, an accurate estimate of the character

and principles of Clarges, he felt himself justified in soliciting permission to introduce him to my mother, whose quiet, and rather monotonous mode of life, might, he thought, be occasionally enlivened, and agreeably diversified by the society of the accomplished Englishman.

"Distrust is not the characteristic of the female mind, especially where its own thoughts are guileless, and its impulses pure. Still, perhaps, my mother might have proceeded with some degree of caution in receiving the visits of a person concerning whose station, character, and circumstances, she could obtain no other than conjectural information, had not Father Magrath's influential testimony, in favour of his conduct and habits, been supported by her own knowledge of a fact which, however trivial in itself, confirmed her belief in the respectability of his position in society.

"A few weeks previously to his arrival at Clonrennan, my mother and sister had paid

a short visit to Dublin, for the purpose of sitting to one of the most distinguished miniature painters of that city, in order that I might be enabled to carry with me to the East, some record of the form and features of those whom I loved best on earth. As they had some intimate friends in the capital, they were induced, during their short residence there, to visit some of the public places of amusement; and two or three evenings before their departure, they had accompanied their relation, the Dowager Lady Glanmire, to the stage-box of the theatre, on an occasion when the performance was honoured by the presence of the lord and lady lieutenant. The vice-regal box was close to that in which they sat, and they had ample opportunity of observing the features of those who were its occupants. When, some time after their return to Willow Cottage,—during one of their daily drives in a little pony-chaise, they encountered Clarges busily intent on sketching the view from a

slight eminence which commanded the road down which they were passing,—they at once recognised in him a gentleman who had occupied a conspicuous station in the lord lieutenant's box on the night of their visit to the theatre, and appeared to be on terms of intimate familiarity with their Excellencies.

"Being, therefore, satisfied on the score of his station in society, my mother was well-prepared to listen with a favourable ear to the corroborative evidence which Mr. Magrath's testimony afforded in the matter, and she did not hesitate to grant the permission required. As I have already stated, the manners and conversation of their new acquaintance were such as powerfully to second the prepossession in his favour for which he was generally indebted to his appearance and *abord*. In addition to his other accomplishments, he was very musical; and my sister's vocal and instrumental performances, which were really surprising, considering the few

opportunities she had enjoyed of cultivating her natural powers, afforded a constantly recurring pretext for his visits to the cottage.

"Every body knows how rapid is the growth of intimacy under such circumstances, where the opportunities of daily intercourse are enhanced by seclusion from all other society, and unqualified by that diversity of objects, habits, and pursuits, which, in the vortex of the world, admits of association without sympathy, and familiarity without friendship. My sister had lived but little in society; she was, comparatively, unused to certain conventional graces of deportment that had not yet found their way into those remoter regions, or communicated their polish to the manners of the provincial youths, whom she occasionally met, on her rare visits to the mansions of the neighbouring gentry. Was it surprising, therefore, that a young man, whose good looks and distinguished appearance were assisted by every advantage of

superior education and refined habits,—whose naturally strong intellect had been cultivated by reading, and improved by foreign travel,—whose conversation wore an air of solidity, relieved by striking powers of language, and enlivened by the graceful badinage of the gay world,—should have soon captivated the youthful imagination of a girl who had never yet been addressed in the tone of gallantry by any one towards whom she could feel that deference and respect so essential to the pure and exalted love of woman?

"Whatever might be his real defects or vices,—however cold-blooded his selfishness, or perfidious his heart, to *her* he spoke the language of honour,—of virtue,—of sensibility. The sentiments he uttered, on all occasions, were such as to command respect; his gentle and deferential homage could scarcely fail to conciliate her affection; and before I had been three days at the cottage, I had seen enough to convince me that Geraldine had yielded her

heart to the devoted attentions of the fascinating stranger. This conviction caused me great uneasiness; for although I could not discover anything in his appearance or behaviour calculated to excite doubts as to the correctness of his story,—the plausibility of his address, and the elegance of his manners, were not quite sufficient to satisfy me of the respectability of his character, or the honourable nature of his intentions.

"At nineteen, I could not be supposed to possess much knowledge of the world; but I had been, for the previous two years, abandoned, as it were, to my own guidance, and obliged to exercise my own powers of observation, in regulating my conduct among the little community of which I formed a part. It is scarcely necessary to observe that human nature may be studied with effect, even on the contracted stage of a public school, and that its little factions, quarrels, and intrigues, present to our view the germ of those passions,

whose workings in after-life will be but the farther development of principles already in partial operation. In proportion as the lesson is new, are its effects more powerful; and the sudden transition from the quiet and retirement of a peaceful home, like mine, to the busy scene of miniature strife and youthful worldliness, produces a rapid sharpening of the faculties and ripening of the judgment, unknown to those whose initiation into such scenes has been more gradual; whose early habits of intercourse with the world have already accustomed them to half of what they witness, and prepared them for the remainder.

"Whether it were the result of an early mistrust in specious appearances that had been thus forced on my youthful mind,—or some unaccountable foreboding of the future that weighed upon my heart, certain it is, that in spite of his efforts to win my friendship, I looked upon Clarges, from the first days of our acquaintance, with an eye of dislike and sus-

picion. Without exhibiting a feeling of animosity, for which, I was conscious, I had no ostensible grounds,—and for the display of which I had no legitimate motive, I endeavoured to rouse my mother's attention to what was passing under her eyes, and suggested the propriety of her giving rather less encouragement to the visits of Mr. Clarges, until she had obtained some more positive information concerning him. Were he really, I urged, the person whom he represented himself to be,—although his present position and future prospects might render him a very desirable connexion, yet it would be necessary that the consent and approbation of his friends should be obtained, before Geraldine could with propriety receive his addresses; as the honour of our house could not, I said, brook the idea of her entering a family who would not consider themselves fortunate in her alliance. On the other hand, if he had over-stated his means and expectations, prudence forbade the

continuance of an intimacy, which seemed likely to be productive of nothing but unhappiness.

"Although my mother could not refuse to admit the validity of my reasoning in the matter, she contrived to procrastinate her decision on the subject: at one time alleging the difficulty of coming to an explanation with one who had not yet committed himself, and whose attentions had hitherto been the natural result of those facilities of association with Geraldine, which she had spontaneously, though perhaps unguardedly afforded him:—at another, chiding me as causelessly suspicious of an amiable and exemplary character, and regularly dissuading me from my often expressed determination of taking the matter into my own hands.

"In the meantime, a month of my leave expired, during which I endeavoured to counteract, to a certain extent, the effects of what appeared to be my mother's imprudence, by

monopolizing as much of Geraldine's society as possible; and if I could not do so to the total exclusion of Clarges, who constantly joined us in our rides and walks, and almost invariably made his appearance at the tea-table of an evening, yet I contrived, with tolerable success, to baffle all attempts on his part, to engage my sister in private conversation.

"It was impossible that a man of his experience and knowledge of the world, should not observe the systematic way in which I thwarted his intentions in this particular, or that he should fail to penetrate the motive which actuated my conduct. It produced, however, not the slightest alteration in his behaviour towards me. He appeared studiously solicitous to conciliate my regard, by every mark of friendly attention, and a tone of cordial and familiar equality in his intercourse with me, which, under other circumstances, I might have considered flattering from one so de-

cidedly my superior in age and acquirements, if not in station. But all this only served to increase my distrust; and as the time of my departure approached within a fortnight, I was wretched at the idea of leaving Clonrennan, in uncertainty as to the result of his continued assiduities, and finally resolved that I would not quit the neighbourhood until I had come to a full and satisfactory explanation on the subject with Geraldine as well as with himself.

"But, before taking any steps for that purpose, I thought it advisable to speak to Father Magrath, in whose friendship I could safely confide, and whose advanced years and sacred calling invested his judgment with a degree of authority in my eyes, that perhaps the artless simplicity of his character was scarcely calculated to justify. To him I determined to unfold my perplexities, with a view, in the first place, of ascertaining whether he might not be able to supply some farther and more distinct information on the subject of his new ally;

and, secondly, of consulting him as to the best and least offensive mode in which I could call upon Clarges for a distinct declaration of his intentions.

"Accordingly, I set out early one morning to seek the habitation of the priest; but as I drew near the village, I met him mounted on his little pony:

"'I was going to call on you, my dear sir,' said I.

"'And I,' said he, 'my dear boy, am on the road to your good mother's house. I am sorry to say, I am the bearer of intelligence which, I fear, will not be welcome; but I can only say, that it will not cause more surprise to my friends at the cottage, than it has to myself.'

"'What is the matter, father?' said I, with an undefined feeling of alarm. 'What has happened?'

"'Neither more nor less than the sudden departure of our pleasant friend Clarges,' said the priest.

"'Is that all?' said I, greatly relieved, while a feeling of joy shot through my heart.

"'Enough too, I think,' said Magrath, 'for those who enjoyed his society,—and who, like me, had hoped—but, psha!—no matter what I hoped. I am an old fool—and I fear that, in this business, I have not acted prudently. But God knows! I acted for the best; and it was but the day before yesterday, that I was congratulating myself on the prospect of seeing your dear sister so suitably and happily married.—Well!'—

"'Nay, nay, my dear sir!' rejoined I,—my pride being a little hurt at the view which Father Magrath seemed to take of the subject; 'you were proceeding very rapidly in your conjectures, if you speculated on any thing of the kind. My mother and sister have been, no doubt, very happy to receive Mr. Clarges, as a friend of yours;—and in the absolute dearth of all society about here, it was as natural that they should afford him, as

that he should avail himself of, the opportunity of visiting pretty often at the cottage. But beyond that, I am not aware of anything which should authorize us to look upon him in any other light, than that of an agreeable acquaintance; and I, for one, should certainly not have consented to his addressing my sister in any more serious character, until I had obtained some authentic information concerning his station and connexions. He is a very pleasant companion, unquestionably, but we must not forget that we, none of us, know exactly who or what he is. He came to this part of the world for his amusement or convenience; and I presume has left it for a similar cause. The ladies contrived to go on very comfortably before he came, and I have no doubt, they will do very well without him, now that he is gone. There is nothing to complain of, as far as I see,—and as far as I am concerned, he is heartily welcome to take his departure.'

"Whether the worthy clergyman was the dupe of my affected indifference or not, I cannot say; but he shook his head, and observed:

"'Ah, well! he loved your sister, I *know*. I have it from his own lips; but it cannot be helped — he is gone — for the present, at any rate. A letter which reached him yesterday evening, contained, it seems, some news that obliged him to set off early this morning, on his return to England, I believe; for he did not tell me exactly. But he was much agitated, and requested that I would convey his adieux to your good ladies, saying that he trusted it would not be very long before he renewed his delightful acquaintance with them.'

"I was a good deal surprised to hear of this abrupt departure, for which nothing in the conduct or conversation of Clarges, on the previous day, had at all prepared me; and yet I had strong misgivings as to the reality

of that summons from England, which he alleged as his motive for quitting Clonrennan. Why I should have entertained a doubt respecting an occurrence which was neither improbable nor unusual, I can hardly say;—but in my mind, a constant cloud of suspicion hung over his proceedings, and I was, almost unconsciously, on the watch for some incident that might afford me convincing proof of his duplicity.

"As Father Magrath rode on to execute his commission at the cottage, it occurred to me that I would proceed to the village, and enquire of the post-master, whether any letter had really arrived for Mr. Clarges, on the preceding day. This could be no very difficult matter to ascertain, in so small a place, where the number of those who wrote or received letters, was scarcely sufficient to defray the expenses of the cross-post, established between Clonrennan and the nearest post town, ——, which was five miles off.

"On making the enquiry, however, I found that not only had no letter been transmitted to him through the office, on the day in question, but that since he had taken up his abode in the village,—a period of more than two months,—the Clonrennan letter-bag had never contained a single line directed to him. This, the post-master assured me, was a fact that could be relied upon, as he had noted it for its singularity, in the case of a person who evidently belonged to a superior class of society.

"This intelligence naturally strengthened my worst suspicions respecting him; and I now felt perfectly convinced, that, if he were not indeed a complete adventurer, which was difficult to believe, as his manners and appearance certainly indicated a person of family and station,—he had some very strong and discreditable motive for concealing his real name and character.

"With this impression on my mind, al-

though I could not but rejoice at his departure, I felt great uneasiness at the thought of my sister having perhaps allowed her feelings to be seriously interested in favour of so unworthy an object. It was therefore, a great relief to me to find, on my return home, that Geraldine appeared to be in no degree affected by the communication of Father Magrath, beyond what the loss of an agreeable addition to the family circle might be supposed to justify. My mother was much stronger in her expressions of regret; and I could easily perceive that she was labouring under a very keen sense of disappointment, with respect to the result of an affair which, she had flattered herself, would have terminated so happily and perhaps brilliantly, for her beloved child.

"On reflection, however, it appeared to me that the indifference of Geraldine, was too ostentatious to be genuine. I witnessed none of that silent musing or moody abstraction that

under such circumstances, would naturally have characterized her behaviour, if her heart had yielded to the slightest impulse of affection for the person who had so suddenly disappeared. She pursued her ordinary avocations with an air of cheerful alacrity; occupied herself with her music, her books, and her flowers, during the greater part of the morning, and in the afternoon, proposed to me to take a drive in the pony-chaise with her. To this I willingly consented, and during our excursion, I was still more surprised to observe that she kept up her spirits to the same pitch, talking and laughing with great animation, and adopting a serious tone, only when she alluded to my approaching departure for India.

"This over-acting on her part, defeated its own purpose. I saw that she was endeavouring to conceal her real sentiments from me,—and this conviction of course produced in me a corresponding anxiety to detect the extent

and motive of the concealment. Determined at all hazards to penetrate the mystery, I at once, and rather abruptly, taxed her with want of confidence in me,—declared that I had been for some time aware of her real feelings towards Clarges, and conjured her, as she valued my happiness and her own, to tell me whether any engagement subsisted between them.

"It is unnecessary for me to detail the particulars of the conversation that ensued. It will suffice to say, that Clarges had, not unsuccessfully, sought to win her affections, and that the object of his present journey to England, of which he had contrived secretly to apprise her, on the previous day, was to solicit in person, the permission of his uncle, on whom he was in a great measure dependent, to unite himself to her without delay. In the event of his obtaining this sanction, he should, he stated, return to Clonrennan within a month.

"This announcement, instead of removing my apprehensions, only increased my alarm. Had the motive which he assigned been the real cause of his departure, there could have been no ground for mystery or concealment; on the contrary; aware as he must have been of the distrust with which I viewed him, he would have gladly embraced the opportunity of removing my doubts as to his intentions, and had he been able to produce, for my satisfaction, authentic proofs of the correctness of his statement, he was well aware that I should have contemplated the prospect of his alliance, with no adverse feelings. On the other hand, if he were to find his friends inexorably opposed to his marriage with Geraldine, he knew that the family pride, which was not the least conspicuous trait in my character, would prompt me to release him at once, as far as my influence was concerned, from his conditional engagement.

"Thus, had his views been really honourable, he had no motive for concealment, but, on the contrary, every inducement to candour. Under these circumstances, his conduct seemed unaccountable. But the truth flashed upon my mind at once! I was convinced that he had anticipated an effort on my part to come to an explanation, which he had but too good a reason for wishing to avoid; and this sudden departure from Clonrennan was intended in the first place, to lull suspicion, and secondly to get rid of the restraint which my presence had occasioned in his intercourse with the family.

"He knew that it was not in my power to extend the period of my visit to the cottage, beyond the next fortnight; and when he should be secure that my departure for India had released him from the species of personal responsibility which the brother of Geraldine could alone succeed in fixing upon him,—it

was, no doubt, his intention to return to Clonrennan;—with what views, I shuddered to think!

"How accurately I had estimated his character, and appreciated his baseness, the result will but too plainly shew. But I found it impossible to impress either my mother or my sister with a due sense of the danger which appeared to me to threaten the peace of our family. Geraldine, frank, unsuspicious, confiding, alike from her natural disposition, from her extreme youth, and from the circumstances of her education, could not believe in the possibility of such villany on the part of one so specious in appearance, so plausible in language, so fascinating in manners; nor could I indeed venture to express to her the full extent of my suspicions. It was certainly more to be wondered at that my mother was inaccessible to my reasoning on the subject: but although of an age when caution and mistrust seem natural to the human mind,

her long seclusion from the world, in depriving her of that experience which she would probably have otherwise obtained, had afforded but few occurrences calculated to alter the early and unsophisticated impressions of a singularly artless character.

"She promised however, at my earnest entreaty, to put a stop to the intercourse between Clarges and the family of the cottage, should he return without such documents as would leave no doubt on her mind concerning his respectability, and should he have failed to procure the consent of his near relatives to his marriage with my sister.

"Not content with these reiterated warnings addressed to those more immediately concerned, I strenuously urged on Father Magrath the necessity of caution and vigilance in a matter in which the worthy priest seemed to take a paternal interest; and although his impressions in favour of Clarges were nearly as strong as those of my mother and sister,

he did not hesitate to give me the required pledge. To his care, as to the only male friend on whom I could rely for assistance in such a position of affairs, I solemnly confided the guardianship of Geraldine's happiness, and the honour of my family; and when, with a bursting heart, and a spirit too truly prophetic of evil, I took a long, and what, alas! was fated to be a last farewell of my beloved mother and sister, I felt some slight degree of consolation in reflecting that I left near them a friend who, though bound to them by no ties of kindred, was as ardently interested in their welfare, and as anxious to contribute to it by every means in his power, as if they had possessed the strongest claims of blood on his good offices.

"I shall not dwell on the separation from every thing that I loved best in the world. Such scenes are distressing enough, without the anticipation of evils like those which I had but too much cause to dread; and the

prospect of a remote re-union can do but little to alleviate the bitterness of parting, even when youth and health combine their chances in our favour. But the gradually declining state of my mother justified the most gloomy apprehensions with respect to her; and no son, I will venture to say, ever bade adieu to his home with a more depressing feeling of despondency than that with which I took leave of the scenes of my childhood and early youth.

"I had been upwards of nine months at Madras, before I obtained any tidings of my family; and my anxiety was great to ascertain how matters were going on at home. But painful and almost agonizing as was this state of suspense, I look back to it as a period of enviable happiness, compared with what I suffered when these fluctuating doubts were exchanged for a dreadful certainty.

"At length, a packet from Europe arrived. It contained not a line from either my mother or my sister, but consisted of a letter from

Father Magrath,—scarcely intelligible in style, and almost illegible in hand-writing from the evident grief and agitation of the writer,—acquainting me that Geraldine had eloped from Clonrennan with Clarges, about two months previously, and that my mother, worn out and heart-broken by this cruel blow, lay at the point of death!

"My feelings, on the receipt of this dreadful intelligence, may be imagined; but it is impossible to describe them. Such an accumulation of misfortune, in its worst shape—for there was but too much reason to fear that it was accompanied by disgrace,—would, I think, have almost deprived me of reason, had not the ardent desire of revenge taken possession of my heart, and sustained me in the exertions which I was immediately called upon to make, for the enravelment of this fatal mystery.

"For many days and nights, scarcely a particle of food passed my lips; nor did sleep once visit my fevered frame; but I felt not the

weakness and exhaustion which usually result from neglecting to recruit the vital powers.

"Having applied for, and obtained a year's leave of absence, on urgent private affairs, I immediately embarked for England, in a state of mind bordering on distraction. Alas! a letter met me at St. Helena, which completed the measure of my affliction. The sorrows of my beloved mother were at an end! She had survived the date of Magrath's former letter but six weeks. She, the most affectionate and tender of mothers, the most exemplary of women, had sunk into the grave, unsoothed by the presence of any one on whose attentions she possessed a natural claim;—cruelly deserted by one of her children, and separated from the other by several thousand miles!—wounded in her most sacred feelings —despairing—heart-broken—and supported in the last moments of her desolate existence, only by one who was a stranger alike to her country, her kindred, and her faith! But if

the assiduities of a sincere and disinterested friendship—the sympathy of an honest and upright heart, could have alleviated sorrows such as hers,—the devoted solicitude with which Father Magrath waited on her death-bed, and ministered to her last wants, would not have been bestowed in vain.

"Although his restricted means and the infirm state of his health made it matter not only of inconvenience, but difficulty for him to leave Clonrennan, I found the worthy priest awaiting my arrival in London, anxious to spare me the pain of revisiting a spot where every object that presented itself to view, would serve but to aggravate my sufferings,—and desirous to afford me, with as little delay as possible, whatever satisfaction I might derive from the detailed account of my misfortunes, as far as they came within his knowledge.

"There was, however, little to be told, beyond what I already knew. A few weeks

after my departure, Clarges had returned to Clonrennan, and with every appearance of chagrin and disappointment, acknowledged to Father Magrath, that he had failed in obtaining the consent of his uncle to his marriage with Geraldine. He then solicited an interview with my mother, in which he made a similar admission, declaring at the same time, his determination to marry Miss Vesey, in defiance of the authority of his friends, if my mother would sanction their union. Under any circumstances, my mother's pride would probably have revolted at such a proposition; —but when, in addition to the mortifications which my sister was likely to encounter in such an alliance, she took into view the chances of poverty and privation,—for Clarges professed to be entirely dependent on his uncle and his own professional exertions for support,—there seemed no alternative but at once to put an end to so unpropitious an attachment.

"She, therefore, with very sincere regret, informed him that all intercourse between Geraldine and himself must cease; and he retired, apparently overwhelmed with grief.

"When the result of his visit was communicated to my sister, she appeared deeply affected, and for two or three days, shut herself up in her room, refusing to see any one, or to go through even the ceremony of her ordinary meals. At length one morning, on my mother entering her apartment, before breakfast, she was startled to find it untenanted. Search was made for Geraldine in the house,—but in vain. A messenger was then despatched to Clonrennan, to Clarges's lodgings, and it was ascertained that he had quitted the village that morning about five o'clock, in a post-chaise which he had sent for to the neighbouring town on the previous evening.

"A variety of facts and coincidences which it is unnecessary to detail, put it soon beyond

a doubt, that Geraldine had accompanied him; and the despair of my poor mother may be easily imagined. Father Magrath volunteered to go in pursuit of the fugitives, and succeeded in tracing them to Donegal;—from thence they had started, in another chaise and pair; but the post-boy who drove them, reported that when they were about two miles out of the town, they were met by a private carriage with post-horses, which stopped at a short distance; upon which Clarges obliged his own postilion to alight, and having paid him the amount of the whole stage to ———, the town to which he was to have driven them,—compelled him to turn back, and retrace his steps to Donegal,—without being able to ascertain from whence the other post-boy had come—the two carriages being too far apart from each other, to admit of his recognising the driver as belonging to any of the neighbouring post-masters. All, therefore, that the post-boy could state on the subject,

was, that the lady and gentleman walked off in the direction of the other carriage, into which, he supposed they got;—but as to the road which they subsequently took, it was impossible to tell.

"The clue, thus lost, was never recovered. Enquiry was made in every direction,—the post-masters within a circuit of several miles interrogated,—every town on the eastern coast of Ulster visited in vain. Week after week, and month after month, passed without any tidings of her lost child reaching the agonized mother. But what carried home to her mind the conviction that ruin and disgrace had followed Geraldine's act of disobedience, was the fact, that the particular enquiries which my mother made, through some of her English friends, concerning the connexions of Clarges, were completely fruitless. She soon ascertained, beyond a doubt, that no family of the name resided in that part of Devonshire where he had fixed their imaginary abode,—

nor, indeed, was the name to be found throughout the whole county.

"The fatal effects of this overwhelming calamity on my beloved mother, have been already told; and little remains to be added. I spent the period of my leave, in travelling over the three kingdoms, in every direction where I fancied a possibility of obtaining intelligence of my unfortunate—my lost sister! But all my researches were unavailing; and I was at length obliged to return to my duty in India, with a spirit broken by grief, and writhing under an insupportable sense of dishonour;—with the dearest affections of my heart blighted,—my fondest hopes scattered to the winds,—and my ardent desire of revenge on the detested author of my misery,—baffled,—as I much feared, for ever!

"Since that period, the events of my life, however numerous and varied in themselves, are foreign to the subject of this narrative; nor had anything occurred to revive my ex-

tinguished hope of a discovery, which would now, alas! be nothing but a renewed source of unavailing grief,—until the day when I first saw your ladyship at the British Gallery. The moment my eyes rested upon your countenance, I was transfixed—bewildered!—for I beheld the exact counterpart of those beloved features, so deeply and painfully impressed on my memory; such as I had seen them four-and-twenty years before, blooming in health, and beaming with youth and innocence! When I afterwards saw you at the opera,—the resemblance seemed to me, if possible, still more striking;—and so well did it stand the test of comparison with the miniature which has never left my bosom for a single hour, since I parted with my sister, that I at once felt convinced it was no fortuitous similarity of feature or expression,—and determined, at all hazards, to pursue the matter farther.

"The knowledge of your ladyship's name

and rank having referred me to the peerages, I was encouraged to proceed in my enquiries, by observing that those works were silent as to your origin and connexions. Unwilling to trust a third party with a secret so deeply affecting the honour of my family, I thought it most advisable to venture on a personal application to your ladyship, and solicited an interview accordingly.

"Your kindness has, hitherto, not disappointed my expectations, and I now wait, in trembling impatience, for the communication of those facts which, I am convinced, you alone can supply, in aid of my mournful investigation, and the knowledge of which, I confidently hope, may at least afford the consolation of certainty to sorrows long enhanced and aggravated by the most painful species of doubt.

"What are my hopes—my expectations—I dare scarcely acknowledge, even to myself;—still less can I venture to express them here.

But the extraordinary resemblance,—the circumstance of the two miniatures,—in my mind, admit of but one explanation; and that explanation can scarcely fail to have suggested itself to you. A few days will, I trust, decide whether I have indeed been misled by such unaccountable coincidences. In the meantime, this brief statement will serve to exonerate me from the charge of unwarrantably seeking to investigate the private affairs of a stranger, and explain anything which might otherwise appear extraordinary in my behaviour to your ladyship."

It does not exactly suit our plan to state, at this precise point of our history, the manner or degree in which Lady Belvedere was affected by the perusal of the foregoing narrative. Before the reader can appreciate her feelings on the occasion, it will be necessary for him to be put in possession of certain facts relating to her early history, to which he is

as yet a stranger;—but as the period at which he must be made acquainted with them, is by no means far distant, we are satisfied that he will consent to repress his curiosity on the subject, until the information in question is regularly developed in the legitimate course of our story. It will here suffice to say, that having read Colonel Vesey's statement with attention, and pondered long and deeply on its contents, she proceeded, according to his express permission, to communicate them to Mrs. Norcliffe, who, after having well weighed all the circumstances of the affair, fully concurred in the propriety of Lady Belvedere's conduct, and willingly consented to be present at the promised interview, to which our heroine looked forward with considerable anxiety.

To the other individuals of the party, Lady Belvedere announced that Colonel Vesey was about to spend a few days at the abbey; and as he was well known to Mr. Tyringham as a man of family and respectability, there was

nothing in the projected visit likely to excite surprise, or afford ground for speculation. Lord Belvedere was too much occupied with the business of the election, to bestow much thought on the proceedings of an elderly nabob; and the whole of the Oriental Club might have migrated *en masse* from Hanover Square to ——shire, and invested the abbey in form,—without his thinking it worth his while to scrutinize the motives of their expedition, or interfere with their peculiar manner of carrying on their approaches. As to Mr. Tyringham, he hailed with delight the arrival of an acquaintance, whose proficiency in the science of whist afforded some slight hopes of a more satisfactory, and more frequent rubber than he had yet enjoyed at Belvedere Abbey.

"Umph! so far so good!" mentally soliloquized he. "We shall do rather better now, with Vesey. It is a pity S——— or T——— is not here. Mrs. Norcliffe is no

bad hand at the game—though she has a foolish prejudice against *shorts;* but as for my nephew,—he is good for nothing but *écarté*, and not first-rate at that either. Well, well! we can't have every thing. Caroline is a good creature, and there are not three houses in England with such a cook."

CHAPTER IX.

The day—the eventful day of nomination arrived; and never did Guelph and Ghibeline, Zegri and Abencerrage, or Jesuit and Jansenist, view each other with more unmitigated hostility than that which existed in the corporation of Talkington, between the respective supporters of the two houses, whose claims to supremacy were about to come into such decisive collision.

Each party felt that fanatical devotion to their cause, so conspicuous wherever the generous impulse of public virtue is strength-

ened and directed by the more philosophical calculations of private interest: for the pure flame of patriotism never burns so brightly, as when fed by the same oil, whose lubricating qualities are so essential to the working of the machinery of government; and the most awful explosions of political as well as religious enthusiasm, are ever produced, where the match is applied through the touch-hole of the pocket.

The morning dawned with unusual splendour; and at an early hour, the long, straggling, and tortuous main street of Talkington, presented a very gay and animated appearance.

The centre window of the "Calverley Arms," where our hero's committee met and conducted the business of his election, displayed a superb crimson silk flag, with the talismanic, and now perfectly safe watchword, "Calverley and Reform," richly embroidered thereon, in gold letters of most gigantic dimensions;



some hundred yards
silver banner of the
proud defiance, adorn
vague, and consequent
inscription: "Belveder
In all directions, bus
looking men, shaved w
arrayed in all their Su
made glossy blue coats,
tard-coloured waistcoats,-
or button-hole, the colour
didate, were seen to circ
fro;—and as they hurri
house, with note-book and
all the restless ubiquity of
these rival partisans met, wi
pressed insolence, or good-h
according to th

called into political existence by the vivifying breath of reform; who, as he stood at his shop-door, with his hands in his breeches-pockets, and his legs extended across the aperture, *à la Harry the Eighth*, presented in his brief parley with the electioneering whippers-in,—a most edifying contrast to their obsequious and deferential manner towards him, by the air of haughty independence, with which he gave, or the look of sulky defiance with which he refused, the solicited promise.

As to the *people*,—*par éminence*—the class concerning whom so much is said by all parties, and for whose interests so little is done by any,—the "great unwashed," who console themselves on these occasions, for the want of an active share in the proceedings of the day, by having all the noise to themselves,—determined, if they cannot out-vote, that they will at least *out-roar* their opponents,—the *people* were in high good-humour,

and fully bent on making the most of a period that held out the prospect of an agreeable deviation from the monotonous course of their existence.

Vast was the consumption of porter, and constant the demand for pipes, in the several *cabarets* with which the town was plentifully supplied; in some of which, the landlords, it is reported, were so liberal as to furnish these highly prized luxuries gratis, or at least, on a basis of such extended credit, as to render their future re-imbursement by the consumers, more than problematical. But although this species of patriotic hospitality was practised indiscriminately by the *aubergistes* in the interest of both parties, Calverley was decidedly the favourite among the numerous class who had *voices* without votes; and spite of the Tyringham clap-trap above alluded to,—"reform" maintained its ground, and appealed more forcibly to their predilections,

as the most venerable, if not the most intelligible humbug of the two.

But as some hours must elapse before the candidates are put in nomination at the hustings, we have time to enquire what our hero is doing in the interval.

While he was dressing, a note was brought to him, which had arrived by a special messenger from the town. It was as follows,—

"*Calverley Arms;—Morning*, 8 *o'clock.*

"My Dear Harry,

"I write to you from my bed, being anxious to apprise you as early as possible of my arrival. How I summoned resolution to undertake such a journey, I can hardly tell; but having given you some reason to hope that I would be present at your ovation, I resolved not to disappoint you, so I seized the "*tempora mollia fandi*," attacked old ——— in a yielding moment, and obtained

my leave. Whereupon my invaluable *camériere* packed my portmanteau,—lowered me by a crane from my first-floor window into my britska—and here I am.

"I find this is the day of nomination, so I must positively get up in time to meet you at the hustings, although much inclined to sleep for a few hours longer, if indeed the horrid row going on in the street, and the constant flapping before my window, of something red, that looks like a Brobdignagian bandana, but which I suspect is your *drapeau*,—would allow of my dozing.

"The borough of Talkington is evidently very drunk;—and it passes my imagination to conjecture what will be the nocturnal condition of a town "whose eyes are set at eight in the morning." I expect to be stunned with vociferous patriotism, and poisoned with the fumes of gin-and-bitters in the course of the day, from the sweet voices of your future

constituents; but *n'importe*, an English election is a thing *per se*, I am told; and we must study the constitution of our country, even at the expense of our own.

"Do send me word when and whereabouts I shall find you at the hustings; or if you can, call for me here on your way.

"Ever yours,

"FITZROY H. LUMLEY."

This note produced a very pressing request from Harry, cordially seconded by Sir Hugh,—who, although he had no personal acquaintance with Lumley, was hospitably anxious to pay him every attention as the friend of our hero,—that the amiable *fainéant* would join them at the hall in time for a substantial twelve o'clock breakfast;—and after accompanying them to the hustings, return with them and take up his abode at Calverley, during the remainder of the election.

To render the summons more effective, a carriage was forthwith dispatched to the Calverley Arms,—with directions to the driver, not to return without the body of Captain Fitzroy Lumley, of His Majesty's Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards. This peremptory hospitality was by no means displeasing to that worthy personage, who though he professed a great love of solitude in the abstract, was not so completely *sauvage* in his notions, as to prefer the doubtful and noisy seclusion of a third-rate country inn, during an election, with all the din of the "rascail rout," to enhance the horrors of bad cookery, sour wine, ill-stuffed chairs, cushionless sofas, low rooms, &c., to the society of a well-filled country house of a certain order; where the absence of positive independence, was in a good measure compensated by the presence of all those luxuries, so well described by Luttrell, as the *superflu si nécessaire.*

Accordingly, he determined at once to surrender himself for a few days into such satisfactory custody; and having complied with his instructions to the letter, he entered the breakfast-room at Calverley Hall, just as the electioneering party had assembled to fortify themselves against the fatigues of the day.

This *entrée* into a numerous circle of people with whom he had no sort of acquaintance, preparatory to taking up his abode amongst them, on the strength of what may be called an invitation *en ricochet*, might have been slightly embarrassing to some sensitive natures. But our friend Lumley was remarkable in society for a species of *à-plomb*, which was never at fault. He was truly an individual of the *impassible* class, and possessed a degree of modest assurance under every possible combination of circumstances that might fairly be characterised as "matchless

intrepidity of face." He was very like Horace's "*Vir justus et tenax propositi*," whom—

> "Non civium ardor prava jubentium,"
> "Non vultus instantis tyranni,"
> "Mente quatit solidâ,"—

and the concentrated rays from fifty *lorgnons*, all converging to one point—himself—would no more have interfered with his imperturbable self-possession, than the furtive glance of admiration which it was much oftener his lot to encounter from bright eyes, unused to shield their inquisitiveness under the crystal of the optician.

Lumley's reception by the whole party was most gracious; and as with well-bred ease, he acknowledged the hospitable courtesies of Sir Hugh, bowed slightly or profoundly to the other individuals of the party, according as they were comprised in the general, or distinguished by the particular introduction

from our friend Harry, and dropped *sans façon*, into a vacant seat at the table near Mrs. Aylmer,—the ladies were all much gratified to observe their favourable prepossession concerning him, as the Pylades of their well-beloved candidate, fully justified by the distinguished air and handsome person, on which, to say the truth, he *rather* piqued himself. But at such a moment—on so critical an occasion, even Chesterfield, or the admirable Chrichton himself, must have been content to enjoy a species of secondary popularity, and could not have indulged a hope of rivalling Harry in the good graces of the ladies. With them, the hero of the approaching contest was an object of highly wrought and two-fold interest. His political claims were powerfully reinforced by the amiability of his manners and the *agrément* of his society; during the short time that he had been an inmate of his uncle's house, he had effectually contrived to recommend himself by those numerous little attentions,

and that undefinable air of chivalrous devotion to their service, which the fair sex know so well how to appreciate; and on the whole we may venture to say, that no candidate for senatorial honours was ever accompanied to the hustings by more sincere and fervent aspirations for his success, on the part of those whose smile must ever enhance the charm of victory, and afford the best consolation in defeat.

Lady Mary, the indolent and literary—Mrs. Sowerby, the blue and philosophical,—Mrs. Aylmer, the fair and tender-hearted, however they might differ on other points, were all agreed respecting Harry; and, indeed, as the last-mentioned lady handed him his cup of coffee, with a "Go-where-Glory-waits-thee" sort of look, which in the days of chivalry would have kindled the valour of fifty knights-errant, and sealed the doom of giants and dragons *à discretion*,—Lumley could not help thinking that he should be sorry *his* wife car-

ried her political enthusiasm quite so far in favour of so good-looking a candidate.

"Well, gentlemen!" said Sir Hugh, looking at his watch, "it is now half-past twelve—I give you just a quarter of an hour, and then we must be off. But before we start, we must all drink success to our future member;—and, ladies, I need scarcely bespeak your prayers during our absence."

"Why, if all reports are true," said Sowerby, "some of us may have occasion for them; and at all events, I should recommend the laying in of a good stock of lint, court-plaister, and gold-beaters' leaf. They say the Belvedere party mean to make the most of the *new-laid Macadam* in the market-place; and that hampers of dead cats arrived by last night's van, at the Green Lion."

"My friend Calverley, sir," said Lumley, eyeing the amiable speaker with mingled curiosity and disgust, "has had the advantage of some experience in these lively ebullitions

of popular feeling; and you will, consequently, find it rather difficult to excite his apprehensions. When a man has been so fortunate as to command a troop of cavalry, in a manufacturing town, he is soon inured to the free circulation of paving-stones in the atmosphere,—and becomes granite-proof in a very short time;—and as to dead cats, there is really not a more inoffensive projectile in the whole armoury of electioneering warfare. So the ladies need not be alarmed."

"Oh," said Sir Hugh, "you do not yet know our friend Sowerby, Captain Lumley.—That is merely his *way*. He is a prophet of evil, *par métier*. But we pay no regard to his predictions."

"True," said Sowerby; "I am no more attended to than Cassandra among the Trojans."

"Or Thersites among the Greeks, perhaps;" said Lumley, "*avec intention*."

"Sowerby, my good friend!" said Lord En-

niscorthy, "you have got a Roland for your Oliver—regularly trumped, by Jove!"

"Oh!" said Sowerby, "your lordship need not be too triumphant. Settling-day comes but once a week, at Tattersall's, I believe;—and when Monday next comes round, perhaps Captain Lumley may not find the balance much in his favour. In the meantime, allow me to compliment him on his classical attainment, which, for a guardsman, are really stupendous!—I had no idea that His Majesty's household troops read Homer—even in Pope's translation. I understood from you, Mr. Heneage,—that horses and billiards were the chief objects of their study."

"From me!" exclaimed the mystified Heneage, *ouvrant de grands yeux*, and reddening up to the temples, "I am sure I have never said a single word to you on the subject, Mr. Sowerby."

"I did not say that you had, my dear sir," rejoined the cynic, "but I have had the hap-

piness of being in the same house with you for the last week,—and, perhaps, rather unphilosophically, I transferred my particular observations on the individual, to the whole species.—That is all!"

"I have no doubt," said our hero, "that the branch of the service to which Mr. Heneage belongs, will never suffer by any general inference drawn with respect to them, from *his* character or conduct as an individual. You should forgive him, Mr. Sowerby, for riding so well,—seeing that a soldier can less afford to dispense with such an accomplishment, than a philosopher: and as to his proficiency at billiards, I must say that he gives us all a lesson that might sometimes be studied with advantage, in its application to every other species of contest;—for he sets us the example of moderation in victory,—and good-humour in defeat."

"Very true, my good sir," said Sowerby; "and who knows but we may be all edified

before it is very long, by observing the manner in which you emulate his virtues in the last-mentioned particular."

"Come, come!" said Sir Hugh; "pray cease that raven-croak of yours, my dear Sowerby; and if you *will* vaticinate, indulge us, by way of novelty, with a favourable prediction. You are to understand, once for all, that the day is—must—and shall be ours.—Belvedere is a great fool if he goes to the poll."

"That remains to be seen," said Sowerby, "but I wish you may be right, Sir Hugh."

"I never heard a wish that sounded so like a fear;" whispered Harry to Lord Enniscorthy; "but our good-natured friend is determined to die *game*."

"*Game?*" exclaimed his lordship, in the same subdued tone; "*carrion* you mean, my dear fellow!"

"Pray," enquired Lumley, of the lady next to whom he was sitting, "can you inform

me who that most facetious and singularly benevolent individual is? He seems the very impersonation of lemon-juice or alum—the genius of mustard-and-vinegar!"

"That is Mr. Sowerby—my husband;" answered the lady, in no very placid tone.

"You don't say so?" exclaimed Lumley, not in the slightest degree discomposed by a *bévue* which would have covered any other person with confusion. "Then I have a thousand apologies to make to you, in either view of the case; for if I have calumniated your lord and master, I justly incur your hostility; and if I have estimated his character correctly, I am still more unpardonable in reminding you of your misfortunes.—I wish it were in my power to retract; but as no special pleading can possibly save me, I must only plead guilty, and throw myself on the mercy of the court."

"You must exhibit more contrition," said Mrs. Sowerby, "before you call upon me for a lenient sentence. However, I shall post-

pone judgment until after your return from the hustings."

"Very good;—and in the interim, you will be able to decide on the mode and measure of my punishment:—whether I shall beat hemp, or read political economy;—whether you will hand me over to the house of correction, or the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge;—to Miss Martineau,—or the Tread Mill."

"I perceive," answered Mrs. Sowerby, "you are so hardened an offender, that the only alternative should be Van Diemen's Land, or Coventry! You are adding the offence of heresy to that of petty treason. I will have nothing more to say to you."

"Come, gentlemen, to horse!" said Sir Hugh. "Ladies, you must no longer detain us from the field of glory.—So let us have our ribbons, and we will be off."

Sundry crimson-and-gold favours were now produced by the ladies, and distributed among

the party who were about to proceed to the hustings. Lady Mary, who had made a wonderful effort to rise in time for breakfast on this august occasion, was in high good-humour and graciousness; and quite oblivious of her ailments, in the excitement of the moment.

"*Addio! caro nipote!*" said she, as she extended her hand to our hero,—adding, in the words of Semiramide:—*à me riedi vincitore!*"

"A good omen—a good omen!" exclaimed Scalp, who was troubled with a distressing incontinence of punning. "Your ladyship is quite right.—It will be *vinci-tory*—for the *Whigs* will carry the day!"

And under cover of this brilliant sally, the electioneering party made their exit, to a burst of laughter from the ladies, as unextinguishable as the merriment of Homer's gods and goddesses.

CHAPTER X.

CHEERS, long, loud, and deafening,—combined with cries of "Calverley for ever!" and other vocal indications of popular enthusiasm, rent the air, and made the welkin ring, as the *cortége* drove up to the hustings. Sir Hugh's britska, drawn by four splendid bays, decorated with the ribbons of the candidate, and driven by two most orthodox postilions, led the procession. It contained the august person of the future representative, accompanied by his uncle, Sir Hugh, Lord Enniscorthy, and Fitzroy Lumley. The rest of the party followed in sundry other vehicles.

As our hero moved slowly along, through the immense crowd that filled the market-place, at one end of which the hustings had been erected, he could not but reflect a little on the nature of popularity, when he found himself thus "the observed of all observers," —the cherished object of political attachment, on the part of a set of people, of whom not one in a thousand had ever seen him before; and almost all of whom had been ignorant of his existence, until within forty-eight hours of the time when they thus obstreperously exhibited their feelings of regard towards him. But there is something intoxicating in the huzzas and plaudits of a large body of people, which seldom leaves the mind perfectly free to examine, with philosophic coolness, into the causes of this flattering enthusiasm. And after all, why should we be anxious to make a discovery which is but the prelude to a disenchantment? How few of the honours, pleasures, or even attachments of this life,

will bear the test of analysis—how few can dispense with the illusion which usually constitutes half their charm, and which time seldom fails to dissipate, too soon for our happiness,—even without the assistance of philosophy!—Or rather, is not that the truest philosophy, which is willing to view every object under its brightest aspect;—which is content to be deceived, where the semblance of things is so much preferable to the reality,—and seeks not to investigate causes, whose development is destructive of their effects.

But Harry was in good humour and high spirits;—he felt tolerably secure of his election, and very independent of that worthy class, who, at Talkington, as elsewhere, are good enough to enact *chorus* in the electioneering drama. He could, therefore, afford to be analytical; and as, with uncovered head, and smiling aspect, he returned the courtesies of his future constituents, and bowed low in token of gratitude for their love,—he indulged

with considerable hilarity, in a train of thought similar to this:—

"Deduct so much for the magical influence of reform—so much for the effect of my name —so much for love of clamour—so much for porter-stimulated enthusiasm,—and how much of all this remains to my particular share?"

At length they reached the hustings, and alighted from the carriage amid renewed plaudits; and about five minutes after, the Tyringham party made their appearance, and were greeted on their approach, with very opposite demonstrations of feeling. Hisses, groans, and yells, assailed the astonished ears of the noble candidate, who was justly indignant at such a return for his condescension, in putting in abeyance his privileges as a peer, for the purpose of sitting in a reformed and *roturière* House of Commons. But he let the tempest rage on with all the more equanimity, that the vociferous patriots by whom it was raised, were content with the deafening row

amid which they received him, and made no attempt to give additional point to their sarcasms, or weight to their reasoning, by any overt acts of violence towards the unpopular party. Perhaps the sight of a large body of constables, specially sworn in for the purpose of keeping the peace, and the knowledge that a troop of the —— dragoons had been marched over from the barracks at ——, and stationed within a *constitutional* distance from the scene of action, had their effect in repressing the too active impulses of popular feeling. Be that as it may, his lordship reached the hustings, unharmed in body, although egregiously vituperated in words,—and the business of the day commenced.

The returning officer of the borough was the mayor, who, fully impressed with the importance of his functions, came to the front of the hustings,—and with a voice and manner in which grace and dignity were singularly combined,—allowing for the spherical form of

his figure, and the provincial peculiarities of his pronunciation, — read His Majesty's writ for the election of a burgess to represent, in the ensuing parliament, the ancient and loyal borough of Talkington.

Whereupon, the Hon. Oswald Tyringham, late member for the borough, presented himself to the meeting, and in a short speech, which might have been still shorter,—seeing that not one word of it was heard beyond the limits of the hustings, owing to the clamour of the patriotic non-electors below, at the appearance of their quondam anti-reform representative,—begged leave to propose the Right Hon. Wyndham Henry Tyringham, Viscount Belvedere, &c., of the Kingdom of Ireland,—as a fit and proper person, &c.

This announcement was received with a fresh burst of disapprobation, mixed with some applause.

Sir John Pocklington, Bart., then came forward. He was a man of few words; and

having mumbled some inarticulate sounds, which, by the initiated, were explained to mean:—"I beg leave to second the nomination;"—he bowed awkwardly, and retired.

And now the Calverleys came *en scène*;—but as they were "the popular party,"—as their success was identified with the cause of "the people,"—Sir Hugh had determined that all their proceedings, throughout the election, should bear the stamp of liberalism, and avoid the remotest suspicion of a leaning to aristocracy! Instead, therefore, of entrusting the task of proposing and seconding the candidate to a member of any of the noble or ancient families in the neighbourhood, he condescendingly imposed that important and honourable duty on Mr. Baxter, the leading shoemaker (and, of course, patriot) of the town, as proposer, and Mr. Hemmingway, the town clerk, as seconder of our hero, on this interesting occasion. What an edifying thing is "the pride that apes humility!"

The nomination of Harry Calverley was, *comme de raison*, received with a degree of enthusiasm by the "sovereign people,"—to the full as rational as the hue-and-cry which had followed the proposing of his opponent. But the time having arrived for the several candidates to address the electors,—Lord Belvedere, who had been first in the field, and was, therefore, entitled to the precedence in debate, as well as in nomination, came forward and spoke as follows,—in his most affected tone of voice, and with his most supercilious *hauteur* of manner:—

"Electors of Talkington!"—(Here Mr. Tyringham touched him on the elbow, and whispered something in his ear;—upon which, he added)—"Gentlemen,—

"In presenting myself to your notice, as a candidate for the representation of your borough,—I trust that I shall not be expected to indulge in the common-places of electioneering oratory which usually grace the

harangues of what is called the *liberal* party, upon these occasions. It would be a poor compliment to the good sense of those whom I am now addressing—of such of them, at least, as are entitled to take part in the proceedings of the day,—were I to seek for your support, or deprecate your opposition, by hypocritically exaggerating *your* political importance,—or meanly undervaluing my own claims to an honour which I feel confident of obtaining.—(Great disapprobation.)—Gentlemen, I beg leave to assure you, that I am neither to be intimidated by gestures, nor silenced by clamour;—(more uproar,)—and I would venture to suggest that those persons who are not qualified to vote upon this occasion, will effect very little by howling."

Here the uproar was so tremendous, that for two or three minutes the orator judged it useless to proceed. He, therefore, folded his arms very deliberately, and with an air of the most self-complacent imperturbability, awaited

the moment when the storm should subside sufficiently to allow of his resuming the thread of his discourse.

In the meantime, Sir Hugh Calverley came forward, and with that species of clap-trap liberality, so often practised by the popular party, under similar circumstances, appealed forcibly to their feelings as men—their sense of justice, as Englishmen!—a nation, whose boast it was, that they gave all sides a fair hearing, &c. &c. Let them, at least, listen to what the "*nubble lurd*" had to say, &c. &c.

This expostulation was received with conflicting cries of:—"Well said, old boy!"—"No—no—we'll have none of his gammon!"—"Shame—shame!—fair play's a jewel."—"Off—off!"—and "No—no!—Go on—go on!"—uttered on all sides, with a degree of energy and vociferation that made confusion worse confounded.

At length order, or at least silence, was in some measure restored; probably, because the

most noisy of the patriots were beginning to be rather tired of roaring; and his lordship was suffered to proceed.

"Have you quite done, gentlemen?" continued he, in the same conceited tone. "I should be sorry to interfere with your conscientious discharge of a duty which, I have no doubt, you are *well paid for performing*;—(Cries of 'Shame, shame.')—but what I have to say will not detain you very long, if you will condescend to listen to it,—or at least, allow of its reaching the ears of those for whom it is more particularly intended. It is, I believe, customary, under the circumstances in which I find myself, to make a sort of political confession of faith. Mine will be found to be very simple, and comprised in a very few words. I am a Tory—I always have been a Tory,—and I ever will be a Tory!—(Great uproar.) Yes, gentlemen, I belong to that party which have always proved themselves the best friends of the people;—

not by flattering their insane and unreasonable prejudices,—not by pandering to their worst passions,—but by consulting their true interests, and legislating with a view to their *real* advantage. On this ground, and as the representative of a family to whom you have long entrusted the guardianship of your political rights,—a trust, which I will venture to say, they have ever discharged most religiously;—(cries of 'No—no!')—I fearlessly and confidently claim your suffrages on the present occasion.—(Cries of 'Oh, to be sure!' —'Devil doubt you!'—and 'I wish you may get 'em!' &c.) I am proud to think, gentlemen, that in the disgraceful political juggle by which you have been deprived of one half of your share in the representation of your country,—the house of Tyringham has had no part. They, at least, have stood firm, through good report and evil report;—and if their opposition has unfortunately been unavailing, they have still the consolation to

reflect that they have done their duty. The votes of my honourable and revered relative on the unprincipled disfranchisement, or at least partial disfranchisement of this ancient and loyal borough, will remain on the journals of the house,—a lasting record of the fidelity with which the members of my family have hitherto guarded the interests confided to their care, and redeemed the sacred pledges given by them to their king, their constituents, and their country!—Gentlemen, I will detain you no longer; but content myself with saying, that should you think proper to return me to parliament as your representative, I will endeavour to deserve your confidence by a strict adherence to the principles hitherto acted upon by those of my family, who have preceded me in the representation of Talkington."

So saying, and with a stiff, haughty air, the noble lord retired, amid a roar of disapprobation which had gone on increas-

ing from the time when he began to allude to the reform bill, and which had risen at last to such a pitch, as to render the latter part of his speech perfectly inaudible, at even a short distance from the hustings.

It was now Harry's turn to address the electors; and nothing could be more enthusiastic than his reception by the people, when he came forward for that purpose. It must be owned, indeed, that putting all political feelings and pretensions out of the question, he possessed a great advantage over his opponent, in his personal appearance and manners; qualities which are not without their weight in the balance, on these occasions.

Not that nature had been niggardly in her gifts to Lord Belvedere.—Far from it,—he was, as we have said, strikingly handsome, and even elegant in his *abord*. But the extreme affectation of his air,—and the contemptuous *hauteur* of his manner,—a *hauteur* greatly increased by the consciousness

of his unpopularity, were very well calculated to destroy the natural effects of his good looks, on the worthy electors of Talkington. On the other hand, there was about our friend Harry, a frank, open, honesty of manner,—and an air of perfect good-humour, that would have redeemed a face and figure of very inferior pretensions, and, in the present case, were powerful auxiliaries to a countenance, whose fine intellectual features were cast in the most aristocratic mould,—and a form in which manly vigour and grace were combined in nearly equal proportions.

His voice too, was of that deep, rich, penetrating character, which at once arrests the attention of the listener; and its well modulated tones contrasted most favourably with the short, sharp, and particularly unmusical accents, which distinguished Lord Belvedere's delivery, and accorded but too well with the pertness and flippancy of his address.

Harry spoke nearly as follows:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"Had I entertained any doubt as to the result of the contest in which I am about to engage, the kind and flattering reception which you have this day bestowed upon me, would at once have dispelled every mist of uncertainty that might cloud the horizon of my hopes. After such gratifying demonstrations of regard from the independent electors of this ancient borough,—can I feel otherwise than confident of success?—and may I not enjoy by anticipation, the triumph which, in my humble person, awaits the glorious cause in which we are all so deeply interested! (much cheering.) Gentlemen, I repeat it—I am doubly assured of victory;—for if my confidence in your generous support could admit of being strengthened, that corroboration would be amply supplied by the speech which you have just heard from my noble oppo-

nent. (hear, hear!) That noble lord, whose talents I admire, and whose candour I reverence, has adopted a mode of ingratiating himself with the electors of Talkington,—which has at least all the merit of originality, if it cannot claim the praise of judgment. With much of the spirit, although with very little of the meekness of an ancient martyr, he has made a confession of faith, and avowed his unqualified adherence to a political creed, which, however orthodox *he* may esteem it, has long been viewed by the good sense of the country, in the light of an exploded heresy. No explanatory phrase,—no word of qualification has he condescended to introduce, by way of deprecating the inevitable result of his political Quixotism. He *is*—he *was*—he *will be* a Tory!—a Tory, pure and unadulterated,—unimpressible by the experience of the past,—and heedless of the prognostics of the future. In him you have no prospect of change,—no hope of improve-

ment! Do I object to this frankness, on the part of the noble lord? Far from it! It is honest, at least, if it is not wise; it screens him effectually from the charge of temporising,—and if it does not secure his return for the borough of Talkington, I think you will agree with me, that it furnishes you with most satisfactory grounds for his exclusion. (Hear, hear! and cheers.)

"I trust, however, it will not be imputed to me as an offence, if I do not imitate the noble lord, in his unconditional pledges of adherence to party. I must hesitate to avow myself a Whig,—if that declaration necessarily involves a sacrifice of my own individual judgment, and a servile submission to the opinions of any one man, or set of men. —No!—I will range under no banner but that of my country!—I belong to no party, but that of the people!!! (Immense cheering, and a few cries of "humbug," from

the Belvedere party.) To watch over *their* rights,—to protect their interests,—to consult their happiness,—will be my constant endeavour in parliament, should I be placed there by your free and independent votes; and although I am painfully conscious of my deficiency in point of talent,—more particularly when compared with the distinguished relative whose retirement from public life we all so deeply deplore,—and to my family connexion with whom I am proud to acknowledge myself indebted for your support,—yet I will not even yield to him, in zeal for the prosperity of the borough, the liberties of the subject, and the good of my country! (Immense cheering.)

"Having said thus much respecting myself, I must take leave, before I conclude, to advert to what has fallen from my noble opponent, with respect to the interruptions that he experienced at the commencement of his

address. It was my sincere wish, and, I may add, my confident hope, that, whatever might be the result of the election, the contest should be carried on in a spirit of good-humour and liberality on both sides; and that no unnecessary bitterness of feeling, might convert the fair and honourable rivalry of politics into a struggle of private or personal hostility. I regret to perceive, however, that the noble lord seems not to be equally impressed by the advantages of mutual courtesy and mutual forbearance on these occasions; as in animadverting on the interruption before alluded to, he was pleased to utter a remark, which I certainly should not have left unnoticed at the moment,—had I not conceived that respect for the electors, and consideration for the noble lord himself, made it advisable to postpone any observation I had to make, until after the conclusion of an address commenced under such disadvantages.

"I need not assure you, gentlemen, that

nobody could witness with more regret than I did, the unwillingness manifested by a part of this assembly, to give the noble lord that fair and impartial hearing to which every candidate is so justly entitled. It was therefore with feelings of no ordinary surprise, —to give it no stronger name,—that I heard the noble lord insinuate that the unseemly clamour, of which, I admit, he had so much cause to complain, proceeded from *salaried* agents. The imputation thus cast upon me and my party is obvious, and such as, with every disposition for the maintenance of harmony, it is impossible for me to overlook. Still, I am willing to believe, that I may have misconstrued the meaning of the noble lord,— or that, perhaps, in the excitement of the moment, he may have stated what, on maturer reflection, he may not be inclined to assert. I am by no means desirous to fasten on his words, any offensive interpretation which he may be disposed to disavow;—but

a regard for my own character, as a gentleman and a soldier, requires that I should come to a distinct understanding with him on this subject. I therefore call upon him, in common candour, to declare openly, in the face of this assembly, whether it be, or be not, his intention to charge me with the disgraceful act of hiring persons among the rabble to hoot him down, and thus deprive him of the means of making his sentiments known to the electors.—I await his answer."

Here Calverley paused, and there was a general cry among the crowd, for Lord Belvedere, who immediately came forward, and with his usual supercilious self-possession, said :—

"In reply to the appeal which has just been made to me by my honourable opponent, I have only to say, that I do not consider myself called upon, either for an avowal or disclaimer of the meaning which he ascribes to my words; he best knows how far the imputation of which he complains would be

well or ill founded. I will therefore leave it in his hands, and at the risk of whatever inferences he may think proper to draw from my refusal, decline to answer a question, the form and nature of which are so strangely at variance with that spirit of conciliation, of which the honourable gentleman has spoken so much."

So saying, his lordship retired, amidst the hootings of the crowd, and our hero resumed:—

"As the noble lord has thought fit, with equal candour and courtesy, to refuse all public explanation, in this matter, I shall of course defer my enquiry to some more appropriate season and opportunity;—when I shall not despair of obtaining from him an explicit, if not a satisfactory answer. In the meantime, I will no longer detain the meeting from the business of the day, by the farther discussion of an affair which I must now consider as personal to myself; but with a firm and re-

spectful assurance of success, I leave my cause in the hands of the worthy, enlightened, and independent electors of Talkington."

The question was then put by the mayor, when the show of hands being decidedly in favour of our hero, the choice of the electors was declared to have fallen upon Harry Calverley Esq.

Whereupon a poll was demanded on the part of Lord Belvedere, and the two following days having been appointed for the purpose of taking the sense of the electors, the meeting adjourned.

"I say, captain!" said Sowerby to Lumley, as they were about to leave the hustings: "My advice about the lint may not have been altogether superfluous, I fancy.—Sha'n't we have some broken heads, eh?"

"Why really, Mr. Sowerby," replied Lumley, "I should be sorry to insure yours;—as, I must say, that in your case, I look upon such a casualty as by no means without the

range of probability. With respect to any body else, however, I must beg to decline giving an opinion."

"Umph! diplomatic enough, at any rate! But it won't do.—There's gunpowder in the wind; and you know that as well as I do. Our candidate must fight that saucy jack-anapes of a lord,—or else, we must cut him!"

"Hark ye! Mr. Sowerby!" said Lumley, "You were so good as to compliment me, some time ago, on my classical attainments. I will farther justify your panegyric, by calling to your recollection a passage—in Lucretius, I believe,—of which you put me forcibly in mind.—You seem fully impressed with the delights of watching the effects of a storm at sea, from the security of the shore.—But have a care! Those who venture too near the water's edge, on these occasions, are sometimes washed away by the tide. Does the

nature of my metaphor suit the focus of your mental vision?"

"I never talk in parables;" said Sowerby, "and don't consider myself bound to understand them."

"Indeed! *Davus sum, non Œdipus*—(*Litt. Hum.* again, you see, Mr. Sowerby!) Well, I must expound. In plain English,—You are benevolently desirous to bring about a duel between the rival candidates."

"No such thing!" interrupted Sowerby—"You have no right to say that."

"Well—I am mistaken—You consider it not desirable,—but inevitable—a necessary evil.—Now I have only to remark, that there does not exist, in His Majesty's service, a gentleman more competent to decide on the propriety of fighting, or not fighting, than my friend Harry Calverley, whether in his own case, or in that of another. You may rely upon it, that he will do what is right on the

present occasion, Mr. Sowerby; and that he will proceed under the sanction of competent professional authorities. But whatever may be the result of this misunderstanding with Lord Belvedere, I would merely suggest to you, whether this gratuitous pre-judging of the case,—this laying down of the law, with so severe a penalty annexed thereto, might not possibly be attended with unpleasant consequences to the self-constituted counsellor, should it reach the ears of the principal party concerned.—You understand me now, Mr. Sowerby, I presume. *Verbum sat sapienti.*"

Sowerby's reply, (if indeed he meditated one) was prevented by the approach of Sir Hugh, who was collecting his forces for the march homewards.

"There he goes!" muttered Sowerby, as Lumley walked off to resume his seat in the britska. "An impudent, conceited prig!—a confounded supercilious, arrogant, presuming son of ——."

"—A grilling father;" interrupted Scalp—"That is the best way to get out of it, my dear Sowerby; particularly for a man who has been in the east, like you. One should never sacrifice the ladies upon these occasions. Poor dear Mrs. Lumley! Thanks to me, her reputation has had a most providential escape!"

"I tell you what, Scalp!" said Sowerby, "the insolence of these red-coated gentry—these guardsmen-fellows,—is perfectly unbearable!"

"Psha!" said Scalp—"you are deucedly fond of a joke, yourself, Sowerby.—You must learn to take one."

"Joke, indeed!" ejaculated the incensed lion; "but it's of no use to talk to you, you are sure to side with them."

"Why, you know," said Scalp—"there is sympathy between these military heroes and me—we both shine in a *Review!*"

CHAPTER XI.

The return of the britska party to the hall, was not quite so merry as their departure. The anticipation of what was likely to ensue from the absurd and unwarrantable petulance of Lord Belvedere, was quite sufficient to cast a slight shade over the brilliant prospect of success that the political state of affairs presented. Sir Hugh was seriously annoyed, and almost out of humour at this *contre-temps*, although he could not but acknowledge that Harry's behaviour had been in accordance with strict propriety on the occasion; Lum-

ley's regard for our hero, was too sincere to allow of his feeling or affecting indifference, where Harry's honour, and perhaps his life, were at stake; and Enniscorthy was too thoroughly good-natured a fellow not to lament the serious consequences of so foolish a misunderstanding; while Harry himself, in addition to the inevitable uneasiness which the prospect of a duel occasions even to those who are least subject to the influence of fear, had the mortification to reflect, that he had been obliged to enter into that very species of contest which Lady Belvedere had urged him to avoid. He felt, certainly, that he had only done his duty, in requiring an explanation of Lord Belvedere's words; but he was by no means certain that her ladyship would acquit him of rashness and needless susceptibility, in the course he had pursued.

"This is rather awkward, and very pro-

voking," said Sir Hugh,—"what is to be done next, Harry?"

"As to that, sir," said Harry, "I must leave the details to my friend Lumley, who will not, I venture to hope, desert me in time of need. Lord Belvedere must of course be brought to his senses. He must, and shall retract his insinuations, or else he must take the consequences. I can never rest quiet under the mere shadow of such a charge."

"Certainly not," said Lumley; "you *could* not act otherwise than you have done. I give you great credit, however, for a tone of moderation in discussing the subject on the hustings, which I trust may contribute to accommodate matters. Belvedere is so clearly in the wrong, that I should imagine any military friend to whom he may refer the affair, will recommend an immediate apology on his part. This of course will not be very palatable to his pride; but it would

be much more difficult to bring about, if you had indulged in violent language in animadverting on his conduct. Were he a person of doubtful or suspected courage, indeed, he could not well afford to apologize, even with the consciousness of being to blame; but as in spite of his absurdity, Belvedere is really a brave man, and has very lately '*blazed*,' as they say in Dublin,—he need not fear the sarcasms of the world, in the event of his friend's suggesting the *amende honorable*."

"I trust it may be so," said Sir Hugh; "but in the meantime, I would advise that no step be taken in the matter, until after the polling has been brought to a close; as I think that hostile proceedings might interfere injuriously, if not unfairly with the regular progress of the election."

"Pardon me, Sir Hugh!" said Lumley—who, as the reader may observe, completely

dropped his tone of *persiflage* and levity of manner, when serious business was on the *tapis*, "pardon me, Sir Hugh—no consideration can be paramount in importance to that of Harry's honour; nor is there any business, the adjustment of which, can claim precedence in point of time. The publicity of the insult, for such it was, would be sufficient in itself, to require the enforcement of that rule; but had even the original offence passed unnoticed by the auditory, Lord Belvedere's subsequent conduct in publicly refusing all explanation, and thus fixing the attention of every body on the affair, has rendered prompt measures indispensable.—What says Lord Enniscorthy?"

"Indeed, Captain Lumley," said his lordship, "I am entirely of your opinion. The more prompt and decided we are, at first, the better our chance of obtaining fair terms in the negociation. It is a good maxim in

politics, that the most effectual way to maintain peace, is to show that you are fully prepared for war."

It was therefore agreed, that immediate steps should be taken with a view of bringing Lord Belvedere to reason; and, in accordance with this determination, Fitzroy Lumley was empowered to communicate with his lordship, on the subject: which he did, by the following note, written the same evening, and dispatched early the next morning, to his committee-room, at the Green Lion;—the said committee-room being considered a more convenient and appropriate *local* for all the purposes of hostile correspondence, than Belvedere Abbey.

"*Calverley Hall;—th September*, 1832.

"My Dear Lord Belvedere,

"My friend, Captain Calverley, conceiving that certain expressions which fell from your

lordship, this day, at the hustings, were intended to convey an imputation highly injurious to his character as a gentleman, I have been empowered by him, to demand a distinct explanation of your lordship's meaning in using the words referred to.

"It therefore becomes my duty to call upon your lordship, explicitly to state whether it was your intention to charge Captain Calverley with having employed hired agents, to obstruct your purpose of addressing the electors.

"Should your lordship still decline to disavow this intention, such a refusal must of course be considered a virtual acknowledgment of the meaning attached to your words by Captain Calverley;—in which case, I have only to request that you will refer me to some friend, who may be authorized to enter into the necessary arrangements on your part, for the immediate settlement of the affair,

according to the only remaining mode to which Captain Calverley can resort for the vindication of his honour.

"I remain, my dear lord,

"Your very faithful servant,

"FITZROY LUMLEY."

"The Lord Viscount Belvedere."

&c. &c. &c.

To this missive, the following answer was in due course returned.—

"*Committee Room, Green Lion—*

"*September —th*, 1832.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN LUMLEY,

"I have had the honour to receive your note of this morning; and beg to state, in reply, that until the arrival of my friend Major Graham, of the —th Hussars, to whom I propose entrusting the management of this affair, and who, I hope, in compliance with my summons, will reach Talkington, in the

course of the day,—I must decline saying anything on the subject to which your communication refers.

"I have the honour to be, my dear sir,

"Your faithful servant,

"BELVEDERE."

"Captain Fitzroy Lumley, Grenadier Guards,"

&c. &c. &c.

In the meantime the polling commenced, and went on with great spirit, but without the occurrence of any circumstance worth narrating. As the day advanced, Calverley was rapidly gaining ground on his opponent;—a fact which operated most favourably on the spirits of the crowd, who, with the characteristic liberality that distinguishes our political contests, did not fail to salute the ears of all the Belvedere voters with every discordant sound within the range of the electioneering gamut. The mayor, however, at the particular request of Calverley, had taken effectual means, by the

judicious disposal of the municipal force, to prevent the possibility of any physical obstruction being offered to the electors of either party, in their progress to the hustings; nor did the agents of the popular candidate throw the usual impediments in the way of Lord Belvedere's voters, by unnecessarily sifting their electorial claims, with a view of retarding the proceedings, and thus lessening the amount of his votes, at the close of the day's poll. Sir Hugh felt so confident of victory, that he took a pride in showing how little he valued the numerical strength of the opposite party; and Harry was unaffectedly, nay, perhaps, as politics go, somewhat Quixotically, desirous that the contest should be conducted on his part, in the strictest spirit of chivalrous delicacy and gentlemanly feeling. It was agreed on both sides, that the bribery oath should not be administered; which considerate forbearance towards the consciences of the electors, on these occasions, cannot be too

strongly recommended. In justice to Lord Belvedere, also, it must be stated, that, in the management of his part of the affair, there was no material deviation from the liberal course pursued by his opponent; any little deficiency of courtesy and good humour, in his lordship's electioneering staff, being such as might reasonably be excused in those who had the mortification to feel that they were on the losing side.

At the close of the first day's poll, the numbers were declared to be—

Calverley	174
Belvedere	96
Majority for Calverley.	78

On this announcement, which the crowd of course received with loud cheers, each candidate addressed the electors, in the regulation set of phrases, appropriated by immemorial usage, to his peculiar position on the poll;—and as the reader, if he have ever watched the

progress of a contested election, is quite competent, without establishing his claim to the gift of prophecy, to anticipate the nature of the points so felicitously dwelt on by each party, we will spare him the perusal of so edifying and original a display of oratory.

In the flourishing state of his cause, Harry might indeed be allowed to feel the gratification and confidence which it was his duty to express; — but poor Lord Belvedere, although he made the inevitable profession of unabated hopes, and sanguine expectations of success, was, in reality, mortified to the soul, and even more astonished than mortified. The fact is, that his canvassing books had displayed a most creditable array of promises, which, had they been all fulfilled, would have insured him one half of the votes contained in the borough; and these being once secured, he conceived he would have no difficulty in obtaining as many of the doubtful as would effectually turn the balance in his favour. It

so happened, however, that a considerable portion of those in whom he placed such implicit faith, were the members of a semi-political, semi-scientific society, known by the august designation of the "Talkington Mechanics' Institute;" whether an affiliated branch of the Metropolitan Association of that name, or, as some said, a small rivulet, branching off from the mighty and fertilising stream of "Useful Knowledge," we cannot exactly say. Certain it is, that whatever might be the nature and objects of its weekly meetings, they were neither unobscured by the smoke of tobacco, nor unmoistened by brandy and water;—luxuries, the moderate use of which we may presume to be not wholly unfavourable to the development of the human intellect, and the ennobling pursuits of philosophy; as must be evident to all who acknowledge themselves admirers of English poetry and German metaphysics.

Now, it so happened, that the members of

this distinguished body belonged, for the most part, to that class, on whom the reform bill had conferred the right of voting; and, as they were sufficiently aware of the power of combination to know how much their importance depended on their unanimity in any political movement, they were wise enough to come to a resolution that the whole weight of their influence should be thrown into the scale of one or other party. This having been carried by acclamation, the next thing to be considered was, the choice of the candidate whose interests they should espouse. But this presented a difficulty not so easily disposed of, — in consequence of the nicely balanced claims of the two families on the favour of the electors, to which we have already so often adverted. From this awful dilemma, they were however delivered by a suggestion that could only have emanated from one of these master-minds, which, in great communities, as in small, are destined to direct

the motions of the mass to which they belong, with a resistless authority of intellect that approaches to despotism.

It was agreed that they should keep aloof, until the election was so far advanced as to enable them to judge of the probabilities of success; when, either candidate having got sufficiently a-head to secure his return with their assistance, they would at once throw the whole weight of their numbers into the descending scale, and decide the fortune of the day. They would thus have held the balance between the two parties; the conqueror would, no doubt, be impressed with the highest veneration for their political power and importance; and his gratitude would, they trusted, exhibit itself towards this effective corps of political *voltigeurs*, in sundry acts of patronage, highly conducive to their corporate prosperity, and individual advantage. In the meantime, they were perfectly at liberty to promise their support to both

parties;—a course which was recommended, as decidedly advisable under the circumstances, as they would thus be certain of redeeming their pledges to one; whereas, if they exhibited any undue partiality in their engagements, they would incur great risk of breaking their word, and by a tardy declaration in favour of the rising candidate, lose half the merit of decided partizanship.

This profound system of tactics was accordingly pursued with great success, and each candidate reckoned with confidence on the support of the "Institute." But towards the middle of the first day, Harry's position on the poll was such as to convince the society, that the moment for their intervention had arrived; and they forthwith proceeded to the hustings in great numbers. One half had voted, before the close of the day's poll; and the remainder, coming early into the field, the next morning, soon placed the triumph of our hero beyond a doubt.

At one o'clock, Calverley was one hundred and fifty a-head on the gross poll; and Lord Belvedere seeing himself betrayed, and aware that there did not remain fifty unpolled voters in the borough, resigned the contest, and drove to the Green Lion in a fit of disgust and indignation, which the conduct of some part of the constituency had rendered very legitimate.

Just as he had alighted from his carriage, Major Graham of the —th Hussars, drove up to the door, having travelled night and day, from London, in obedience to the summons of his friend.

The result of the conference which was immediately held between the discomfited candidate and his military adviser, will be duly laid before the reader, with a variety of other particulars connected with this affair, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

The Calverley party, with the exception of our hero and Lumley, were all assembled for breakfast; and the ladies had decked their countenances in their most engaging smiles, and prepared their most congratulatory phrases, to greet the appearance of the successful candidate, who had been too much occupied with business connected with the election, the arrangements for the chairing, the dinner, &c., to return to the hall on the previous evening.

Great was the exultation of Calverley's fair partisans; and, with the exception of Sowerby, every body present seemed cordially pleased

with the result of the contest. Even the amiable traveller himself could not but affect to be gratified by the success of his host's nephew; but with characteristic good taste, he uttered many a devout aspiration, earnestly deprecatory of the petition, which from what he had casually heard from Lord Belvedere's legal adviser, he had reason to fear was inevitable!

This hint was received by Sir Hugh with less manifestation of annoyance than was usually elicited by any remark that appeared to trench on his parliamentary importance; and even Lord Enniscorthy uttered no sarcastic rejoinder on the occasion. Indeed both gentlemen seemed *préoccupés;* and this forbearance on their part was evidently less the result of a spirit of Christian meekness, than a sort of absence of mind for which the ladies could in no way account.

In spite of the efforts which Sir Hugh made to appear lively and animated, he would every

now and then fall into a *réverie*, which, to judge by the contraction of his brow, would seem to be of no very agreeable character. His chocolate lay untasted before him; and the side-board, which usually, at the morning meal, claimed a considerable share of his attention, now displayed its rich abundance in vain. He also exhibited divers symptoms of restlessness, frequently rising from his chair, and walking towards the window, as if he were in anxious expectation of an arrival.

"Are you sure, Sir Hugh," enquired Lady Mary, not particularly well pleased at having taken the trouble of getting up so early, for nothing; "are you sure that Harry meant to breakfast here?"

"Oh, certainly, my dear;" said Sir Hugh; "unless, to be sure, something particular may have occurred to prevent him. On these occasions, you know, there is always a great deal to be done. He will be here presently I dare say."

"How is that?" enquired Mrs. Aylmer; "did not Captain Calverley sleep at the hall last night?"

"No," said Sir Hugh; "there was so much to arrange with the committee, and they were likely to be detained so late, that he and Lumley determined to remain for the night at the Calverley Arms."

"And I suspect," said Sowerby, aside to Scalp, for even *he* had too much regard for the nerves of the ladies, to utter his conjectures in their hearing; "I suspect their business this morning is with the *Belvedere Arms;—fire-arms*, I mean."

"Hush!" said Scalp; "we had better keep our suspicions to ourselves, or we shall have all the women in hysterics."

"It would be rather a curious wind-up to the affair, if our new member was to be shot through the head this morning," continued Sowerby, regardless of Scalp's cautionary admonition.

"One would think you had an eye on the vacancy yourself," said Scalp. "You seem to consider the probability of such a calamity with such very philosophical feelings."

"Psha! I wish the boy no harm—but the loss would not be irreparable—the race of coxcombs is in no danger of being extinct."

Just at this moment, the sound of a horse galloping at full speed up the avenue, was heard; Sir Hugh started up, and rushed to the window in great agitation. He was just in time to catch a glimpse of the horseman, as he darted past; but the distance between the gravel-road that swept up to the door, and the windows of the breakfast-room, was too great to allow of his ascertaining anything beyond the fact, that it was a man in a groom's dress, who appeared to be sent on business of the highest importance, if one might judge by the eagerness with which he urged his panting steed.

Sir Hugh returned to the breakfast-table,

with a face the hue of the cloth, and the mental uneasiness under which he laboured, was manifest to all present, when the door opened, and a servant made his appearance with a note which he delivered to his master.

"The messenger waits, Sir Hugh!" said the solemn Mr. Walford, as he extended the silver salver.

The baronet snatched the note eagerly. It was directed in a slovenly, hurried, hand, and bore the word "*Immediate*," doubly underscored, above the direction. His hand trembled violently as he attempted to break the seal.

"For heaven's sake, what is the matter, Sir Hugh?" enquired Lady Mary, seriously alarmed by the evident agitation of her husband.

"Nothing—nothing, my dear!" answered he, as he hastily tore off the envelope. But no sooner had he cast his eye over the contents of the note, then he threw it from him on the table, with an exclamation not many degrees



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regret to say, deprive me of the pleasure I should have had in attending the dinner at Talkington to-day. I lose not a moment in apprising you of this. Pray make my excuses to your nephew, and believe me,

"Faithfully yours,

"RABY.

"P.S. I trust you will not forget me on the 30th."

On perusing this note, Lady Mary was still more perplexed to ascertain why it had worked so powerfully on Sir Hugh's feelings. But before any of the party had time to expend much ingenuity in the shape of conjecture on the subject, a tap was heard at the window opening on the lawn, and to the great relief of Sir Hugh and Lord Enniscorthy, the two *absentees* made their appearance outside, with too much glee in their countenances to admit of any farther anxiety respecting the cause of their delay.

"Welcome—welcome!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, as he threw open the *battans* of the French window, and admitted the new arrivals. "How late you are, Harry! The ladies have been all impatience to offer their congratulations."

"Late!" ejaculated Lumley. "Indeed, Sir Hugh, I think we are remarkably early, considering all the business we have gone through this morning. We were at Bamwell Chase by eight o'clock."

"Bamwell!" said Lady Mary; "what were you doing there?"

"My friend Harry," said Lumley,—"I beg his pardon—the honourable member for Talkington—was desirous of a little exercise to give him an appetite for his breakfast. But, seriously, *mesdames*, Harry calls for your congratulations in a two-fold capacity. You already know him as the victorious candidate—the hero of the hustings;—behold this morning the successful duellist! *le preux du pistolet!*"

"Duellist!" exclaimed all the ladies at once, in horror and amazement.

"Even so," said Lumley; "and if you doubt my word, see whether his own blushes do not betray him. Not content with annihilating Lord Belvedere's political pretensions yesterday, he has shot off his lordship's right whisker this morning."

This announcement produced a fresh burst of surprise, not unmingled with exultation on the part of Sir Hugh; and all present being extremely anxious to ascertain the particulars of the affair, Lumley was called upon in his character of eye-witness and principal negociator, to furnish an accurate and detailed statement of the circumstances.

As the reader, however, is already in possession of the origin of the quarrel, and some of the proceedings that were adopted with a view to its adjustment, we shall not give the narrative in Lumley's words, but content our-

selves with stating briefly what had taken place subsequently to the arrival of Major Graham at the Green Lion.

On being made acquainted with the facts, the gallant officer did not hesitate to declare that Lord Belvedere was in the wrong;—decidedly so, in the first instance, by making a charge which it was impossible for him to substantiate, as it appeared to be wholly without foundation;—and still more so, in the second place, by refusing to retract it publicly, when called upon by the injured party, with calmness and moderation to do so. Still, as a tardy compliance with this request might seem to be rather the result of intimidation, than an evidence of a more correct state of feeling on the subject, Graham could scarcely take upon himself to advise an apology;—and although convinced of his error, Lord Belvedere protested that no power on earth should induce him to offer any explanation, until, by receiving his adversary's fire, he had put it out of the power

of his enemies to misinterpret his motives in doing what he reluctantly acknowledged to be an act of justice.

Under these circumstances, Graham had no alternative, but to put himself at once in communication with Lumley, for the purpose of arranging the terms of a meeting which all parties perceived to be inevitable. Upon all such occasions, where the principals are decidedly in earnest, the necessary dispositions of the combat are not matter of such difficulty as to afford to the seconds either pretext or opportunity for much delay in their adjustment. The affair was accordingly fixed for the next morning, at eight o'clock, on Bamwell Common, whither both parties proceeded at the appointed hour.

The ground having been taken, the word was given for both combatants to fire at the same moment; and Harry, who well knew Lord Belvedere's skill as a marksman, was obliged, in self-defence, to exert his own to the utmost,

although by no means anxious to dismiss his antagonist to the shades below, on the occasion of so foolish a misunderstanding. He fired instantly;—his ball slightly grazed Lord Belvedere's cheek, without doing him any other injury than the removal of a part of his whisker; and his lordship, who had not obeyed the word of command, immediately discharged his pistol in the air. He then proceeded, as previously agreed upon, between Graham and himself, to express his regret for the words which, in an unguarded moment of irritation, had fallen from him on the hustings. He now avowed his perfect conviction that Captain Calverley was wholly incapable of the conduct which those words might be supposed to impute to him, and distinctly disclaimed all intention of conveying such a charge.

This was, of course, satisfactory to a certain extent; but as the insult had been publicly given, and as publicly persisted in, Fitzroy Lumley declared that nothing short of Lord

Belvedere's signature to a written disclaimer, could satisfy the honour of his principal, unless indeed his lordship thought proper to make his verbal retractation in as public a manner as he had uttered the insinuation.

After a little demurring, Major Graham acquiesced in the fairness of the alternative; and a statement having been prepared, to the above-mentioned effect, and drawn up with a due regard to the honour of both parties, Lord Belvedere affixed his signature to it; whereupon the combatants separated, with greatly diminished hostility, and increased respect for each other.

If anything had been wanting to crown the political and social popularity of our friend Harry, in the borough or at the hall, this affair, so happily terminated, would have supplied the deficiency. As it was, the electors were prouder than ever of their choice, and the ladies more and more captivated with their hero. The business of the day proceeded of

course with additional spirit and animation, from the remembrance of past dangers, and the pride of recent triumph; but in consequence of the state of the weather,—the chairing of the successful candidate,—by which phrase is now understood his progress through the borough in a barouche and four,—accompanied by the "rabble rout," whose melodious accents are supposed to represent the *vox populi*, on these occasions,—was curtailed of half the splendours which usually distinguish that venerable and imposing ceremonial. The clouds, which had assumed a threatening aspect during the early part of the day, began to dissolve, and send down their *aqueous* tribute to mother earth, just at the critical moment when the procession put itself in motion; and ere it had proceeded a couple of hundred yards on its course, the refreshing streams descended in such bountiful abundance, on the heads of the honourable member and his companions, that the carriage was

immediately ordered to be closed, and the crowd of dripping patriots who had assembled to witness his ovation, were fain to content themselves with what they could see of their well-beloved representative, through the window of the barouche, as the remainder of the progress was performed in double quick time, for the especial accommodation of Sir Hugh Calverley's postilions.

But the glories of the day did not end here. —The dinner which took place in the evening, at the "Calverley Arms," to celebrate the return of our hero, went off to admiration; —at least if we may credit the report of the Talkington Flying Post, and the —— County Chronicle:—and indeed as the editors of these two "best public instructors" had been accommodated with seats at the head table,—and their names handsomely coupled by Lord Enniscorthy, the distinguished chairman of the day, with the inspiring toast of "the liberty of the press,"—they were bound to

give the most favourable account of a festivity conducted upon such truly liberal and constitutional principles.—To adopt a favourite phrase of the daily and weekly organs of public opinion, "our limits will not allow us" to enter into a full detail of all that passed on this august occasion. Suffice it to say,—that Sir Hugh and the whole party from the hall, honoured the dinner by their presence,—that the long, low, narrow room was as crowded, the perfume of lamp-oil as potent,—the venison as cold,—the wine as hot,—the speeches, for the most part, as bad,—and a great proportion of the company as drunk, as the most enthusiastic admirers of such convivial displays of political feeling, could possibly desire.

Harry went through his business like a hero!—delivered the regulation number of *neat-and-appropriate* speeches, judiciously seasoned with *quantum suff.* of local clap-trap,—drank wine with all the notables of the place, and proposed the health of the ladies, with an

affecting tribute to the virtues of the British fair, that went straight to the hearts of some half-dozen stumpy damsels,—who, in all the pride of Roman pearls, artificial flowers, book-muslin, and red elbows, graced a ricketty gallery at one end of the room, which, on ball-nights, was occupied by a crew of musical barbarians, dignified by the name of the orchestra.

In short, he charmed all present by his eloquence and affability,—and finally withdrew amid the acclamations of an assembly, whose strength of lungs seemed to have increased in the same ratio as their powers of vision;—which, we need not say, were doubled;—and after the stunning conviviality of the scene which he had undergone, and the quantity of bad port wine that he had been obliged to absorb, it is no wonder that when he awoke the next morning, his eyes felt like a couple of burning coals, his nose like a lighted cigar, and his mouth and throat like the crater of Mount Vesuvius!

CHAPTER XIII.

The political contest with all its attendant bustle and annoyances, having been brought to a close, Harry did not fail to recollect the permission graciously vouchsafed to him by Lady Belvedere, of paying his respects to her at the abbey, as soon as the election should be fairly over; and as the human mind, skilful to clothe inclination in the garb of duty, is ever prompt to discover the most reasonable pretext for doing that which accords with our particular wishes, —so the honourable member for Talking-

ton, easily persuaded himself that there was not a moment to be lost in availing himself of a privilege, the exercise of which, on his part, recent events had he thought rendered absolutely imperative. Setting *entirely* aside his anxiety to find himself once more in the presence of Lady Belvedere, it was *really* incumbent upon him, to solicit an interview, for the purpose of explaining by what uncontrollable force of circumstances, he had been compelled to disregard her pacific injunctions.

But although, as we may observe, his projected visit to the abbey was the result of so calm and dispassionate an estimate of social proprieties, he was too well aware of the analogy that exists between *moral* and *physical* perspective, to communicate his intention to his friends at the hall, — lest from the inevitable variation in the "point of sight," the object in question should assume in their eyes, a form and aspect somewhat at variance

with the view under which it presented itself to him.

Sir Hugh and the other gentlemen of the party, with the exception of Lumley, had arranged to go out shooting, on the morning after the election dinner, and Harry, who could plead fatigue and exhaustion, had no difficulty in excusing himself from accompanying the expedition. So far all was well, for the departure of the sportsmen left him as he hoped, comparatively at liberty to dispose of his morning as to him might seem most fit, without being subject to even the unintentional *surveillance* sometimes exercised by one's friends on such occasions. But Lumley remained, and how to get rid of him was matter of considerable difficulty. That worthy personage, who had declared his hostility upon principle, to all supererogatory exercise, as a reason for not joining the sportsmen, seemed to be suddenly inspired with an unaccustomed activity, little in accordance with

his professions,—and volunteered his society, when Harry casually expressed his intention of taking a walk. Now it so happened that our hero's especial motive for preferring the pedestrian style of locomotion, was that he considered Lumley less likely to propose himself as a companion in his rambles, than if he had adopted the easier mode of journeying on horseback. But as this manœuvre failed to produce the desired effect, Calverley, by way of a last effort to regain his liberty, ventured to hint that perhaps it was scarcely justifiable for all the men to desert the ladies, and leave them to their own resources even in the early part of the day. Lumley however, at once silenced his objections by declaring, that for the last two days, Mrs. Sowerby's intention of making love to him had been so evident, that it was quite a point of conscience with him to avoid her society as much as possible, as he should really never forgive himself, were

he even unwittingly to afford the unfortunate woman any encouragement, in so hopeless and ill-starred an attachment. Should Harry, however, which he regretted to say he very much feared, be less scrupulous with regard to such matters, and less apprehensive of disturbing the peace of families—he begged wholly to disclaim any wish of interfering with his peculiar views of propriety, and made no doubt that Mrs. Aylmer would be much gratified by his presence in the ladies' morning-room, &c.

And here we think it right to state, that this profession of virtuous forbearance on the part of Captain Lumley, was neither more nor less than a piece of malicious *persiflage*, poor dear Mrs. Sowerby being, in fact, wholly innocent of any felonious designs on the well fortified heart of the fascinating guardsman; and indeed, as the good lady was decidedly on the shady side of forty, and gifted by

nature with a countenance that was calculated to supply at once the best preservative against the awful consequences of flirtation, and the most effectual refutation of calumny, *en pareille matière*, it would be cruel to let her fair fame suffer for a moment, under the blighting influence of so unmerited a charge. With respect to the latter clause of Lumley's remark, however, we cannot so positively rebut the insinuation which it contained; for to say the truth, Mrs. Aylmer's appreciation of Harry's good qualities, had been sufficiently apparent to attract the notice of the whole party,—not excepting that lady's husband, who had, indeed, begun to view this species of *engoûment*, with feelings little allied to Christian meekness. But as the conduct of our hero had, hitherto, been so circumspect as to leave him no reasonable pretext for an *esclandre*, which after all, would have only served to cover him with ridicule, the gallant colonel

was meditating a skilful and timely retreat, and had in fact that morning come to the resolution that he would, in due course of post receive letters of the highest importance, requiring his immediate presence—no matter where—provided he could secure the immediate absence of his too susceptible partner from the dangerous vicinity of Captain Harry Calverley, M.P. for the borough of Talkington, and late of His Majesty's —th regiment of Light Dragoons.

Having formed this prudent resolution, nothing would have prevented him from instantly carrying it into effect, but the necessity of waiting for the arrival of the post which came in rather late in the day; and in the meantime he could not decorously refuse to form one of the shooting party, which had been arranged principally at his desire. But though he liberally and justly acquitted Harry of any serious design against his honour, —he was anxious to make assurance doubly

sure, by enlisting him in the morning's expedition. It was, therefore, with considerable annoyance, not unmixed with alarm, that he heard Harry decline to join the sportsmen; and he had done his utmost to shake our hero's determination on the subject, by descanting most eloquently on the pleasures of the sport in general, and the peculiar facilities which the preserves of Calverley presented for its enjoyment.

Poor Harry had, however, been far too much engrossed by his own hopes and fears, to appreciate the real cause of the colonel's flattering wish for his society; but Lumley's heart was free, and his eyes were open; consequently the comic points of the scene had not been lost upon him, and he had maliciously added fuel to the fire, by strongly expressing his own distaste for the sport, and earnestly dissuading his friend from encountering so much gratuitous fatigue, after all he had gone through during the previous few

days; till at length the poor colonel began almost to suspect, that there was some secret understanding between the two captains, that boded him no good. But there was no remedy, and he went off with the best grace he could assume—at heart a victim to the most groundless uneasiness, but to all outward appearance, an edifying example of that heroic patience, which as the husband of a flirting wife, he had but too frequent occasion to exercise.

The two friends now started on their walk, and Harry still indulged a hope, that he might be able to tire out Lumley in a short time, when if the latter made up his mind to return home, he could, he thought, easily devise some pretext for continuing his perambulations, which might leave him at liberty to pay his proposed visit unobserved. In this, however, he was destined to be disappointed, and after fatiguing himself very unnecessarily, by walking along the high road, which

was not very interesting, and about the town of Talkington, which had still less to recommend it, he had the satisfaction to discover that all his diplomacy had been completely thrown away.

After eating an ice, at the principal confectioner's, buying a pair of gloves at the haberdasher's in the high street, talking a good deal of gallant nonsense to the blue-eyed damsel who did the honours of the *magasin*, and strolling into the public billiard-room, where they found two subalterns in the line, perspiring in their shirt sleeves over an ill-played rubber, they turned their steps homewards, and poor Harry, who beheld all his projects for the morning frustrated, could with difficulty suppress his vexation, or muster gaiety enough to laugh at the sallies of his inevitable companion. But just as they approached the park gates of Belvedere, which lay on their direct route home, Lumley stopped and observed:



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me to worry you a little with the view of conveying a useful lesson, on the judicious employment of mystery in human affairs; and so adieu till dinner! and in spite of your want of confidence in me, you may depend upon my being secret as the grave."

So saying he walked off, laughing immoderately, and left our hero looking very foolish, but altogether more pleased at being relieved from all farther restraint, than vexed at having been so successfully *mystified*.

Calverley walked up the avenue with a rapid step and a beating heart, uncertain of the reception which he should meet with from Lady Belvedere, and rather puzzled to know how he should broach the subject of the duel, as it did not seem likely that he should find her alone. On approaching the house, he perceived a dark travelling chariot, with post-horses, waiting at the door, and two or three servants employed in stowing away packages in and about the carriage. It was evident that

somebody was on the point of departure from the abbey; and Harry, with a feeling of timidity, very excusable when a man is in love, hesitated a moment as to the propriety of presenting himself at what might, perhaps, be an inconvenient juncture of affairs. But this was merely a passing weakness, which was not proof against his anxiety to see Lady Belvedere; accordingly, he proceeded to the door, and having been informed that her ladyship was at home, he was ushered into a room on the ground floor, where he remained alone for some minutes.

It was a small apartment, fitted up as a morning room, and situated at one end of a long suite, which extended for a considerable distance in a straight line; it communicated by lofty folding doors, with a sort of alcove, divided by a couple of advancing pilasters, from a large saloon or gallery, terminating at the other end in a similar recess, at the extremity of which were also to be

seen a pair of folding doors corresponding with those that opened from the room in which Calverley found himself. Opposite those doors, which were now open, a splendid glass, extending from the floor to the ceiling, reflected the whole suite of rooms, and added, of course, considerably to the effect which, from their size, and the magnificence of their decorations, they were calculated to produce. Harry was, however, in no fit mood for the study of upholstery; as who,—when in momentary expectation of the arrival of a beloved object, could fix his attention on chairs, tables, *consoles*, &c.? He flung himself on a sofa near the window, and gazed, or seemed to gaze, on the beautiful park-like prospect that presented itself to his view. But while he sat thus concealed from the observation of any person who might be in the neighbouring apartment, he heard footsteps and voices, amongst which he at once detected those soft silvery

accents, which to him were far sweeter than the most heavenly music.—On looking round to see from whence those sounds proceeded, his eye was caught by the looking-glass, which reflected the figures of two persons who had apparently just entered the saloon, and although they were at a considerable distance, Harry had no difficulty in at once recognising Lady Belvedere and the mysterious Colonel Vesey.

What they said, was not audible; nor indeed would our hero have willingly listened to a conversation of which he was, as it were, a secret and unknown witness; but what he saw was sufficiently surprising to rivet him to his seat in mute and petrified astonishment. Tears were flowing from the lovely eyes of Lady Belvedere, to whom the colonel was speaking apparently in terms, and certainly with gestures of tenderness and passion. Could it be?—she delivered something into his hand, evidently a miniature;—he seized her hand and pressed it to

his lips. Still she retreated not,—she gave no signs of surprise or displeasure. Calverley was transfixed,—but what were his horror and indignation, when he saw the colonel absolutely fold her in his arms, and imprint a kiss upon her forehead!!!

Could Harry have effected his escape unobserved, it is probable that he would have immediately rushed out of the house. But although such a precipitate retreat might have been practicable a few moments sooner, the time was now past; the colonel had left the saloon, and Lady Belvedere having turned towards the room in which Harry sat, uttered a half-suppressed exclamation, almost amounting to a scream, on catching a glimpse in that ill-omened glass of a human figure, who, by his position, must evidently have been an eye-witness of her parting with Vesey.

For a moment she stood irresolute—it was but for a moment, however; and with a hurried step she traversed the alcove, and advanced

towards our hero, who started up at her approach, with a countenance too plainly indicative of the contending feelings by which he was agitated.

"Good heavens! Captain Calverley," exclaimed she, in accents of surprise, and not without some appearance of confusion, "I—I had not been informed of your visit."

"I am afraid,"—said Harry, scarcely knowing what he said,—"that I have chosen an inconvenient time;—I—that is, the servant showed me in here, and ——"

He paused, and Lady Belvedere perceived at once, from the embarrassment of his speech, as well as from the disturbed aspect which he wore, that the affectionate character of the leave-taking described above had not been lost upon him as a spectator. Although the colour of her cheek varied, and her voice trembled slightly as she spoke, she did not lose her self-possession, but replied gravely:—

"Not at all, I assure you—I am perfectly

at leisure, and am always happy to see you—pray be seated."

"Excuse me," said Harry, with increasing agitation, and a manner approaching to wildness,—"I—I feel I have no business here,—and will not intrude any farther;" and he moved rapidly towards the door.

Lady Belvedere was conscious that the moment was critical, not only as far as Calverley's judgment of her conduct was concerned—but even with respect to her reputation, which might be seriously affected by an exaggerated and impassioned statement of what he had witnessed.—Yet, to volunteer excuse, where she could give no explanation, was matter of extreme delicacy;—to assume that any unfavourable inference might be drawn from her behaviour, was in itself derogatory to her dignity, and every way repugnant to her feelings of conscious innocence. But there was no time to be lost: he had reached the door;—in one mo-

ment he would be gone. She must speak—were she even secure against the misrepresentation of the world,—she was painfully aware that she could not afford to forfeit *his* good opinion.

"Captain Calverley," said she, faintly; "stop, I request,—I entreat."

He stopped and turned towards her, with a look that spoke volumes:—reproach—indignation—despair—were all depicted in his glance; but he said not a word.

This expression of our hero's countenance, which conveyed so much that was injurious, if not insulting to Lady Belvedere, at once roused her pride, and restored the confidence of manner, that under such circumstances, could belong only to a clear conscience.

"I have had more than one proof," continued she, calmly, "of the interest which you take in what concerns me; and, therefore, in the full belief that I shall not be misin-

terpreted,—I do not hesitate to say to you as a friend——"

"Madam," interrupted he, coldly, "I am perfectly aware that I have no right to make any enquiry,—your ladyship is not of course called upon to explain to me."

"Explain!" said Lady Belvedere, rather haughtily; "you quite mistake me, Captain Calverley,—it is *not* my intention to give any *explanation* of what you may have heard."

"Heard, madam!" exclaimed Harry, in a tone of energy amounting almost to violence,—and laying marked emphasis on the word, "I have *heard* nothing."

The blood rushed to Lady Belvedere's face, and mounted to her temples; it was not however the hue of shame, but the glow of indignation.

"You *could* have heard nothing, sir, which I am interested in concealing," answered she, in a tone of severe displeasure; "nor have you *seen* anything which I need hesitate to

now—but enough, or rather too much of this. Had I been prepared for the tone and manner, which you have thought proper to assume, I should not have troubled you by the observation, which it is now needless for me to conclude.—I beg I may not detain you any longer."

So saying, and with an air which showed how deeply she was offended, Lady Belvedere rose to leave the room; but Harry, awed by the dignity of her demeanour, and beginning to waver in the conclusion which he had at first drawn from the scene he had witnessed, was in his turn anxious to detain her.

"One word!" said he, in a tone that betrayed his agitation. "If I have offended you, forgive me! I know too well I have no right to speak,—no right to *feel* as I do;—but you have listened to the avowal of sentiments which perhaps I ought to have concealed,—or, if you have interdicted me from giving utter-

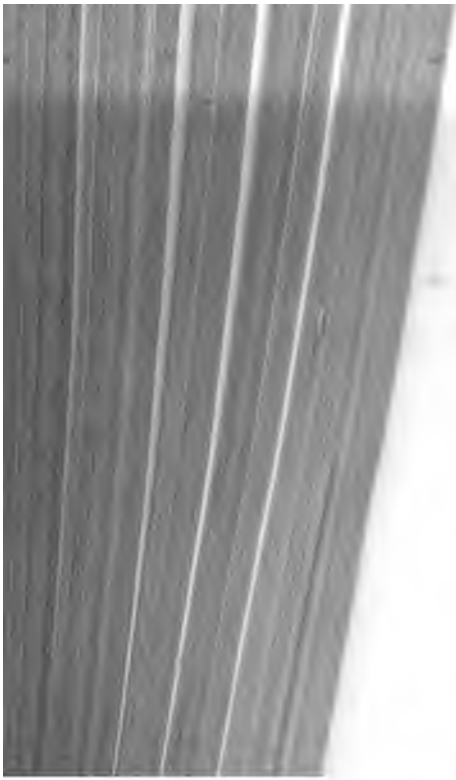
ance to them,—you cannot deny that your prohibition left me still some grounds for hope. Recent circumstances have not been of a nature to diminish that hope; this you will, you must acknowledge. Can you wonder then, if thus unexpectedly disabused,—thus cruelly undeceived, I have forgotten myself for a moment? Believe me, I am sufficiently wretched;—do not,—do not part with me in anger!"

"You seek," said Lady Belvedere, somewhat pacified, and with more mortification than resentment in the tone of her voice, "you seek to deprecate my displeasure; and yet the very terms of your apology are but an aggravation of the offence. If it be true that you have entertained for me the feelings of which you speak—and if, as you say, I have had the weakness to—to listen to their avowal, when for both our sakes, I should have perhaps at once checked their expression on your part, so as to leave you

no pretext for recurring to the subject—if all this be true—and I will not, and cannot deny it,—I might surely have expected less readiness to condemn—less alacrity to draw injurious conclusions from slight, and insufficient grounds;—yes—I repeat it—slight grounds,—for however you may be at a loss to explain—you, you, of all people, should not have misinterpreted the interview which you have thus accidentally witnessed. But I fear *I* have been mistaken—and if so, the sooner I am undeceived the better.—Now, listen, and mark what I say:—not one word,—not one syllable shall you hear in explanation of what you may have seen to-day, however extraordinary it may have appeared. No doubt it is a mystery to you—and a mystery it must remain—at least, for the present; nor will I even afford you the slightest hint as to the period when it may be unravelled, should I ever deem it advisable to explain it. It is for you to decide, then. If in spite

of all this, you can dismiss your doubts, and discard all the unworthy surmises which you have rather *looked* than expressed—it is well, and we are still friends;—but if, on the contrary,—your confidence in me is so slight, your esteem so easily forfeited—as I have had reason to believe,—if a single shade of distrust, or suspicion, still hangs over your mind, this meeting is our last—we part here, and for ever!"

Slowly and mournfully indeed, but in a tone of firmness and resolution, Lady Belvedere pronounced these last words. The pride of conscious innocence—the feeling that rises superior to an unjust imputation—supported her in the effort, and gave to her air and accents the dignity which belongs alone to truth, and which the most consummate hypocrisy would in vain attempt to assume. But the struggle to appear calm, was too great to be farther maintained. After having borne up long enough to give all



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to the infernal gods, his countenance betrayed a degree of confusion, which we are sorry to say, was far from *heroic*.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Miss Caryl, "I beg pardon! I am afraid I disturb you;—I declare, I had no idea there was any body here."

And then with a singular mixture of *étourderie* and *malice* (in the French sense of that word,) having made matters worse,—she was about to retreat with a half-suppressed titter; —but Lady Belvedere, although vexed and annoyed, was not so much embarrassed as our hero, by an interruption, which in point of fact, was of little consequence, as Miss Caryl was tolerably well acquainted with her feelings towards Calverley.

"Stay, Julia!" said she, with an effort to resume her usual composure of manner; "don't be foolish: it is only Captain Calverley."

"Oh, very well," said Julia; "if it is *only* Captain Calverley, *à la bonne heure*. But

now I think of it, I have a very good mind, I would not stay in the room with him.—I have indeed," continued she, addressing Harry. "You are a shocking person, you know you are; after all Caroline and I said to you, to fight with poor dear Lord Belvedere, and to be near killing him too! How can you possibly excuse yourself?"

"Alas!" said Harry, "I must throw myself on your indulgence.—I really could not avoid it, and his lordship himself has acknowledged that *he* was in fault."

"Oh, that is all very well! but you need not have shot off his whisker; you have quite disfigured him,—you have indeed. He says he must be under Brodie for a fortnight at least—but I will say no more—for I am sure you have had a good scolding from Lady Bel. already."

"Indeed," said Harry, significantly, "Lady Belvedere has been very severe; although I acknowledge, not more so than I have de-

served. But her justice is tempered with mercy, and I am *truly* penitent—I confess all my offences—abjure all my heresies, and am ready to submit to any penance which she may think proper to impose."

"Come, Julia," said Lady Belvedere, "after that, I think we may grant him a free pardon."

"Oh, you are far too merciful!" said Miss Caryl, "it is an encouragement to disobedience, to let the offender off so easily.—If I were the arbitress of his fate, he should not escape in that way. I would take him at his word,—and impose a real penance."

"And what should that be—my fair and inexorable judge?" enquired Harry.

"I think *I* can guess," said Lady Belvedere.

"Indeed you cannot," said Julia, hastily.

"*Voyons!*" said Lady Belvedere. "You would, I suspect, insist on his vacating his seat, and leaving Lord Belvedere to be elected

[redacted] for the Borough of Talkington —I have [redacted] your favourable opinion of [redacted]."

"I am sure, Caroline," answered Mrs [redacted] of sagacious mind and conscious [redacted] nothing to mar the accuracy of [redacted] conjectures. "How can you [redacted] a question —you know Lord Belvedere declared yesterday, just before he [redacted] to London, that nothing should [redacted] him to stand for Talkington

many franks as you please—and secure for you the best place in the ventilator, when I make my maiden speech.—Could Lord Belvedere do more?"

"*Grand merci!* I seldom want franks, at least when my brother Dorking is with us—but I may trouble you occasionally.—As to the ventilator—I was there once, and never mean to go again. I hate parliamentary speeches, they are all so stupid! so that unless you promise to be very entertaining, and not to say one word against the dear duke or the Tories, I am afraid I must decline your offer."

"My dear Julia!" exclaimed Lady Belvedere, "you are really too *exigeante*.—We ladies cannot presume to dictate in such matters;—our despotism must not extend beyond the drawing-room. We should leave public affairs to the discretion of those who are more legitimately engaged in them."

"You underrate the importance of the female character," said Harry.—"There are

some—and indeed not a few of your sex, whom it would be well for us if we consulted on all occasions;—to whose clear judgment and upright feeling the guidance of our public career might be as safely confided, as the direction of our private conduct.—I, at least, am by no means anxious to emancipate myself from an influence which I have generally found to be beneficial; and so, as I have already received Miss Caryl's instructions with respect to my conduct during the ensuing parliamentary campaign,—may I request to be favoured with yours?—you need not fear that they will be disregarded."

"Oh!" said Lady Belvedere,—"I am against the system of pledges—and cannot consistently with what I have just now said, interfere with the free exercise of your political judgment; I will therefore confine myself to general precepts.—Be not too hasty in your conclusions—never decide on insufficient evidence;—never condemn any party unheard,—

and where you have reason to feel confident that every thing *is right*—do not be *lightly* induced to believe that there is any thing wrong!"

"Why, my dear Car'," exclaimed Miss Caryl, "what is all this about? in the name of goodness, what have right and wrong to do with politics?"

"Very little indeed, one would suppose, by the course which public affairs generally take;" said Harry, laughing, "but nevertheless Lady Belvedere's advice is admirable, and will not be lost upon me, she may rely upon it.—And now," continued he, "I must take my leave. I am about to return to town in a day or two. Can I do any thing for you in London?"

"Thank you," said Lady Belvedere, "we are going up ourselves in a week, to remain a few days on our way to Brighton."

"Well, I trust that I am at liberty to repeat my visit in town?"

"You know best," said Lady Belvedere,

smiling, but rather significantly, " whether you are justified in taking such a liberty."

" Enough!" said Harry. " If you leave it to me, I can have no farther hesitation on the subject."

END OF VOL. II.

HARRY CALVERLEY

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL HYDE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

M.DCCC.XXXV.





HARRY CALVERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

As we cannot but acknowledge that the conduct of our heroine, in the parting interview with Vesey, as detailed in the preceding chapter, is liable to misrepresentation, we owe it to her character to afford the reader an immediate explanation of the circumstances which had produced so good an understanding between them. We must, therefore, recur to that point of our narrative where we left Lady Belvedere, after the perusal of our mysterious friend's statement.

Faithful to his appointment, the colonel ar-

rived at the abbey, on the third day; and as the absence of Lord Belvedere and Mr. Tyringham, on their morning's excursion to Talkington, removed all restraint with respect to the secret conference which was about to take place, Lady Belvedere lost no time in apprising her guest that she was ready to redeem her pledge; and, accordingly, led the way to a small room at one end of the abbey, which was exclusively devoted by her to matters of business, and such occupations as she might be desirous of pursuing, without the liability to constant interruption.

It was a moment of deep and painful interest to Lady Belvedere and the colonel; and Mrs. Norcliffe (whose presence had been stipulated), although not personally concerned, was anything but an indifferent spectator on the occasion. Vesey's fine countenance bespoke the most violent agitation,—his cheek was pale—his eye restless—and his lip quivered with emotion.

Not a word was spoken for some minutes; until Lady Belvedere, going up to a large old-fashioned, richly-carved, oak cabinet, in a recess of the room, unlocked the massive doors; and touching a spring, displayed to view a secret drawer, from which she drew a small packet and an oblong morocco case, which, by its form and size, appeared as if intended to contain two miniatures.

"Is that—" enquired Vesey, in a trembling voice—"does that case contain—" and he held out his hand eagerly to receive it.

"Stay;" said Lady Belvedere; "it is right that before you examine the contents of this box, you should cast your eye over this paper. It was written by my beloved friend and guardian, Mrs. Wilmot, in the remote contemplation of what has at length occurred. It is an accurate statement of the circumstances under which she adopted me."

Vesey's hand trembled violently as he took the packet; and on opening it, his eyes wan-

dered for some time over the lines, in a manner that shewed he was incapable of collecting their import. At length, he said, sinking into a chair, and pressing his hand against his forehead—

"I am ashamed of this weakness—but I cannot read this paper!—the words swim before me. Will your ladyship—will Mrs. Norcliffe be charitable enough to read it to me?"

"Most willingly;" said Mrs. Norcliffe; and taking the MS. from his hand, she read as follows:—

"*To the Viscountess Belvedere.*

"My daily decreasing strength warns me, my beloved child, that I have not many weeks to live. As a Christian, it is, therefore, my duty to prepare, in every way, for an event to which I should look forward with cheerfulness, as I trust I do with resignation, did not the thought of parting with you cast a gloom over the prospect which it is not easy to dispel.

"The pecuniary misfortunes with which it has pleased Providence to visit me, have, indeed, spared me a good deal of trouble in the way of testamentary arrangement; but though I have it no longer in my power to leave you, in my will, the substantial evidence of my affection, which I had once fondly hoped to bestow upon you, I have yet a duty to fulfil towards you, the performance of which will be highly consolatory to my last moments, and may, I trust, prove in some degree satisfactory to you.

"It is now one-and-twenty years since I undertook, fortunately for my own happiness, and, perhaps, I may say, not unfortunately for yours, to supply the place of a mother to you, in the absence of all visible ties between the world and you, and in the unaccountable deficiency of all information concerning your birth and family. After such a lapse of time, during which no farther light has been thrown on the subject, it is highly improbable that

your natural connexions should ever be discovered. Still, in the mysterious chain of events of which human life is composed, — the time may come, when the truth will be revealed to you; and although, by the blessing of Providence, you are now placed in a position which renders the discovery a matter of comparatively inferior importance, nothing should be omitted on my part, which may conduce to a result, on many accounts so desirable.

"As I have said, my days are numbered; and as, consequently, my *personal* testimony is likely to fail, I have, therefore, determined to supply its place as far as possible, by leaving in your hands a correct and detailed statement of the only facts which have come to my knowledge respecting your origin, and the circumstances in consequence of which you were placed under my care. This brief record, combined with the few articles of dress and ornaments, &c., which came into

my possession when I took charge of you, and which I have carefully preserved, in the hope that they may one day be of use in the discovery of your relations, will thus present a connected chain of evidence, without which it would be impossible to arrive at anything like certainty in the matter.

"In reading this statement you must recollect that I am writing for *others*, rather than for you. You will, therefore, find in it a number of details with which you have been long familiar; nor am I, indeed, certain that it contains a single fact of which you are in ignorance. Nevertheless, you will read it with interest, not only as a regular and authentic account of events in which you are so deeply concerned, but as the last testimony of affection from one to whom you have ever been as a beloved and only child.

"It was in the spring of 18—, about two years after the return of my husband and myself from India, that Mr. Wilmot was

ordered to the sea, in consequence of a severe illness, from which he had been suffering during the winter. As the state of his health rendered quiet indispensable to his recovery, instead of taking up our abode in any fashionable watering-place, we were glad to avail ourselves of the kindness of an intimate friend, who offered us the use of a marine villa on the coast of Hampshire, about ten miles from Southampton, and close to ———, a small village, inhabited chiefly by fishermen, or as some said by smugglers; and which was sufficiently retired in situation, and insignificant in appearance, to ensure us the full enjoyment of the solitude we sought. It had also the advantage of being within a reasonable distance of our own place in the same county, where we had passed the winter, so that the journey was accomplished with very little fatigue to the invalid.

"Two or three days after our arrival at Harleigh Lodge, I was surprised to find my

own maid in tears, when she answered the summons of my bell, as I was about to dress for dinner. She was a good kind-hearted creature, who had lived with me from my childhood, and I naturally enquired, with some anxiety, the cause of her affliction.

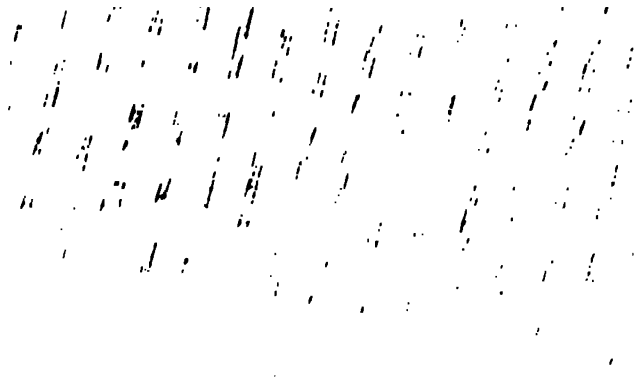
"In answer to my question, 'For Heaven's sake, Milford, what has happened?' she replied, with a fresh burst of tears, 'Nothing has happened to ME, ma'am, but I have just seen a sight that would melt a heart of stone! There is the most beautiful young creature I ever saw, lying at the inn in the village, at the point of death, in a raging fever;—she has nobody with her but a sweet little baby, about two months old;—and the people of the house can't find out who she is,—where she comes from,—or what brought her to ———. She is evidently a lady, ma'am, for she has the whitest hands I ever saw; and Mrs. Maddocks, the landlady, says that her clothes, and every thing about her, were

all of the best, when she arrived at the inn the day before yesterday; but she seemed in great distress of mind, from the first,—crying over her baby,—and refusing to eat any dinner, although she could well afford to pay for every thing, as she has several guineas and a twenty pound note in her purse.'

"I was a good deal interested by the account which Milford gave me of the beautiful and forlorn stranger; and having ascertained from the former, that the apothecary of the village had pronounced the fever under which the unfortunate lady was suffering, not to be of an infectious character, I had no difficulty in obtaining Mr. Wilmot's permission to visit the sick chamber, for the purpose of affording every assistance in my power, to one whose condition appeared to be so desolate.

"I therefore hastened to the small inn of the village, where I found Milford's statement corroborated in every respect. Mrs. Maddocks assured me, that the unhappy stranger

had all the appearance of belonging to a superior class of society; but that she had in vain attempted to discover her name or the abode of her friends. For the last four-and-twenty hours she had been violently delirious, and the medical man gave it as his decided opinion, that she was suffering under a brain fever. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Maddocks had thought herself justified in opening her portmanteau, and examining every article in her possession which was likely to afford any information concerning her. But no document of any kind had been found which could serve as a clue to direct the people of the house in their inquiries. There were no letters, no papers of any description; and the initials G. V. upon her linen, were of course but scanty materials for the farther investigation of her name and circumstances." (At this period of the narrative, Colonel Vesey groaned aloud, and covered his face with his hands.) Mrs. Norcliffe continued.





almost dazzling. Her throat and neck were of the most exquisite whiteness; and when I looked upon the small, delicate, and beautifully formed hands, that every now and then clutched the bed-clothes with convulsive energy, I did not require the evidence of the costly diamond ring which encircled one of the taper fingers, to prove that its wearer was of gentle birth and refined habits.

"The extreme youth of the sufferer added greatly to the painful interest of the scene. As far as I could judge, under circumstances so unfavourable to a correct conclusion on the subject, she could not be more than nineteen or twenty years of age; and in all probability, had I seen her with the bloom of health on her countenance, and the advantages of dress to heighten her attractions, she would have appeared to me still younger.

"She was evidently quite unconscious of what was passing around her,—the incoherent expressions, and broken exclamations which

occasionally burst from her lips, bearing testimony to the tumult of her brain;—as the grinding of her teeth, and the unceasing restlessness of her movements, gave token of acute bodily suffering.

"She spoke almost incessantly, if indeed it can be called speaking, where words, inarticulate in sound, and unconnected in sense, seemed to proceed mechanically from the tongue,—like the undirected workings of some disorganized piece of machinery. Surrounding her bed in silence, all present watched with anxiety for a single sentence, whose import might direct them in their farther proceedings, with respect to the unfortunate sufferer;—but in vain. All that could be distinctly noted in her ravings, was that the name of Henry recurred frequently in tones of alternate tenderness and reproach.

"On my questioning the medical man as to the state of his patient, he informed me that he considered her in imminent danger; and

so anxious was he to divide the responsibility of a case which appeared almost hopeless, that he had persuaded the people of the house to send off an express to the principal physician at Southampton, which they lost no time in doing, as soon as they had ascertained that the unhappy lady had funds sufficient to defray all necessary expences.

"From the melancholy contemplation of youth and beauty stretched on the bed of sickness and probably of death, I turned to an object scarcely less affecting under the circumstances,—the forlorn but unconscious little innocent, who was about to be thus early separated from all its natural ties,—cast unprotected on the compassion of strangers, and doomed in all likelihood to experience, from the cradle upwards, the harsh discipline of an unfeeling world, in every form of poverty, unkindness, and neglect!

"The poor child was crying faintly, perhaps for the want of that natural sustenance

which the mother could no longer supply; and one of the female servants of the inn was vainly endeavouring to soothe and pacify it. But on my approach it suddenly ceased, and a smile played across its fairy features as it held out its little arms towards me. Perhaps there never was a more striking example of the sudden and capricious preference of one person over another so often exhibited by children, even in their earliest infancy; and indeed, in spite of my better reason, it has often appeared to me as if some secret and mysterious sympathy had prompted these advances of the little orphan towards one, whose future life was destined to be so intimately connected with her own. Certain it is, that from the moment when I took the helpless infant in my arms, I felt a degree of interest in its fate, and compassion for its desolate condition, beyond what the common impulse of humanity would suggest on such an occasion, even to the heart of a mother. It is probable,

indeed, that the remembrance of a lovely and only child, whom it pleased Providence to take from me at a very early age, some years before, exercised a powerful influence on my feelings, and prompted my sudden resolution to take charge of the infant,—should the death of its mother leave it unclaimed and unprovided for.

"Although the express sent off to Southampton had used the utmost diligence, Dr. —— did not arrive until the unhappy sufferer was past all human aid. Her constitution sank rapidly under the violence of the disease, and towards midnight she breathed her last. A few minutes before her death, she seemed to regain a faint consciousness of her situation; for, after having passed from the ravings of delirium into a state of stupor, she suddenly opened her eyes, and looked round her with an expression I shall never forget. The exclamation of 'my child,' seemed to hover on her lips, and when she

discovered her infant reclining on my breast in a tranquil sleep, the look of agonizing grief and anxiety disappeared for a moment, and a faint gleam of satisfaction lighted up her features ere they settled in the rigidity of death.

"When all was over, and I had seen the seals put upon the effects of the unfortunate deceased, I returned home; and Mr. Wilmot, whose kind heart was soon interested by my recital, in favour of the little orphan, having consented that I should take charge of it until its natural protectors should be discovered, I next day provided it with a suitable nurse, and had it removed to my own house.

"In the meantime every possible enquiry was made concerning the family and friends of the unhappy lady; but without effect. She was indeed traced as coming direct from London in the Southampton stage, from which she had been transferred to the branch coach of ——; but beyond that it was impossible

to ascertain her movements, as she had entered the Southampton coach, at Charing Cross, without having previously secured her place at the booking office,—a proceeding in which it is usual to take down the name, if not the address of the party.

"As nobody appeared, to take upon himself the direction of her affairs, the remains of the beautiful and unfortunate stranger, were in due time, quietly interred in —— churchyard, the money which she had left being applied to defray the expences of the funeral, medical attendance, &c. At length, after a few weeks of unsuccessful search, the particulars of which I need not detail, the few ornaments and articles of value belonging to the deceased, were made over to me, as the self-constituted guardian of the child. These, I carefully and religiously preserved, until called upon by the marriage of my beloved Caroline, to give them into her own keeping.

"Having determined, with the sanction of my husband, to educate my little charge in every respect as if she had been my own child, I had her christened Caroline after myself,—and added the name of Vere, as one which accorded with the second of the initials which I had observed on the linen of her unfortunate mother.

"How amply, how more than amply, my dearest child, you have repaid your obligation to Mr. Wilmot and myself, by your constant and devoted affection, your dutiful behaviour, and the sunshine which your cheerful temper and angelic disposition have cast over the most gloomy and care-fraught periods of our life, I need scarcely repeat; nor is this perhaps, the proper place to give utterance to the feelings with which my heart overflows. But I cannot conclude my task without expressing a fervent hope, that should it please Providence to dispel the cloud of mystery which hangs over your birth, you may find in those

with whom you are connected in blood, hearts that will value, and minds that can appreciate those qualities which must ever endear you to all who come within the range of their influence.

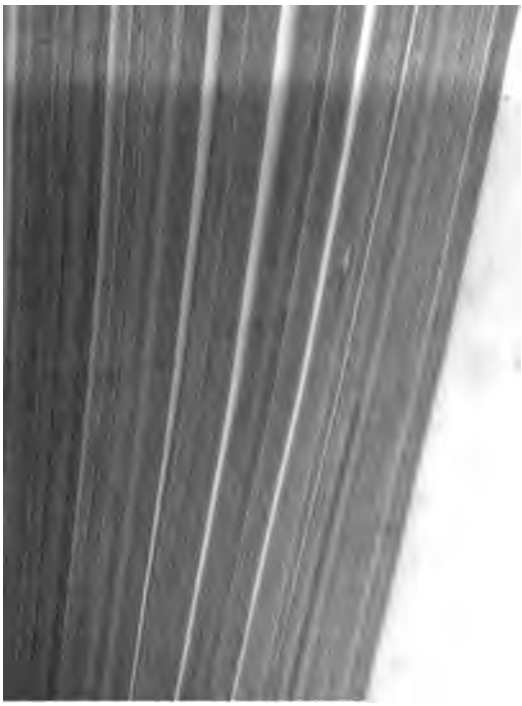
"CAROLINE WILMOT."

"*Tyringham Hall,*

"*September* 1, 1829."

"The names of 'Belvedere' and Jane Norcliffe,' appear as witnesses to Mrs Wilmot's signature," added Mrs. Norcliffe; "and a list of the articles in Lady Belvedere's possession, referred to in the foregoing narrative, follows, with similar attestations to its correctness."

The perusal of this document, to which Colonel Vesey listened with a species of agonized attention, that even to an uninterested spectator would have appeared almost awful, was deeply affecting to Lady Belvedere,—who could not hear, without strong emotion,



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"It is—it is herself!" exclaimed the colonel, in a voice of stifled emotion,—and hastily drawing from his bosom the portrait which has been so often mentioned,—he exhibited both miniatures in juxta-position. They were exactly alike in every respect: and so nearly equal in point of execution, that none but the practised eye of an artist could have decided as to which was entitled to be considered the original.

All three contemplated for some time, with silent amazement, and renewed conviction, this striking evidence of Vesey's near relationship to our heroine.

"This miniature," continued Vesey—after a pause; "has never left me for an hour, since the day when I received it from the hands of the artist. It is evident, therefore, that the copy must have been secretly made, before the original was delivered to me. That they are both by the same hand, does not, I think, admit of a doubt—and the cer-

during my recent visit to
the artist to whom my sist
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ship spoke of another
portrait."

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and a trembling hand;—b
he cast a glance upon the
blood rushed to his cheek
fire, and he exclaimed in a
able rage —

is his detested countenance—his treacherous look—his infernal smile!"—and losing all command of himself, he raised his hand for the purpose of dashing to the ground the object that had excited his wrath.

But, fortunately, Mrs. Norcliffe anticipated this movement, in time to prevent its execution. She suddenly grasped his uplifted arm, and recalled him to his senses by saying, in a calm but severe tone,—

"For shame! Colonel Vesey! recollect yourself! and consider whether it is becoming in you to exhibit, in this place, such unmanly weakness,—such a childish burst of passion! Would you requite the confidence with which Lady Belvedere has treated you, by destroying in your senseless rage, the most valuable and important evidence respecting her birth?"

Vesey was at once subdued and abashed by this just rebuke. His arm dropped powerless by his side;—and suffering Mrs. Norcliffe to

length; it was but a
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of Lady Belvedere."

"I rely upon your wo
Norcliffe, as she returned

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his examination, he restored it to Lady Belvedere.

"This," said he, calmly, "is the last link in the chain. It converts conjecture into certainty! Could any shadow of doubt have remained on my mind, concerning our near relationship, this, combined with all I have heard to-day, must at once have dispelled it. Surely, surely, dearest Lady Belvedere,—you are impressed with a conviction in accordance with mine. Can you resist the combined force of such circumstantial and documentary evidence? Can you hesitate now to acknowledge my claims as your uncle? Believe me, your recognition of me in that character, will afford the only consolation calculated to soften the remembrance of a calamity that has embittered every moment of my existence for a quarter of a century."

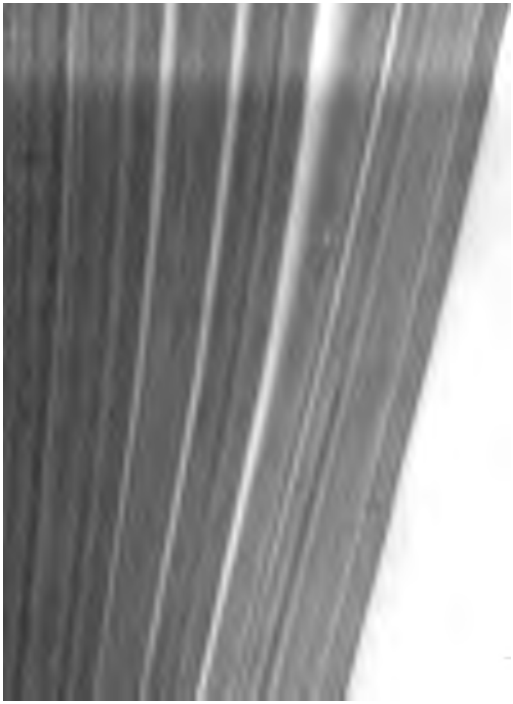
"Stay," said Mrs. Norcliffe, "that is a point which may be discussed presently. You

have not yet examined every thing, I believe, Colonel Vesey. There are two or three ornaments found by Mrs. Wilmot, amongst the property of Caroline's unfortunate mother, which may perhaps afford some farther corroboration of your conjectures. This diamond ring and locket, for instance?"

"No," said Vesey, after a very close inspection of the ring; "I have no recollection of such an ornament having belonged to my sister. Nor do I remember to have seen that locket before. But what occasion have we for *their* evidence? The truth is sufficiently apparent.—Ha!" exclaimed he, with energy, and fixing his eyes intently on an object which lay on the table before them, "what is that?—tell me—I entreat—was *that* also found on her hand—speak—I conjure you!"

"It was removed from her finger after death, by Mrs. Wilmot," said Lady Belvedere.

"Great God! I thank thee!" exclaimed Vesey—with a burst of almost frantic exultation.—"It is—it is—a wedding ring!" and throwing himself nearly at full length on the sofa,—he bent his head over his outstretched arms, and wept like a child!



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Hugh," ans

ble you with any political advice, or instructions with respect to your conduct in the house. Your public career I leave to yourself, at least for the present; and I am quite satisfied to depend on the general accordance of our principles."

Harry could scarcely repress a smile; but he *did* contrive to preserve his gravity, and the baronet continued:

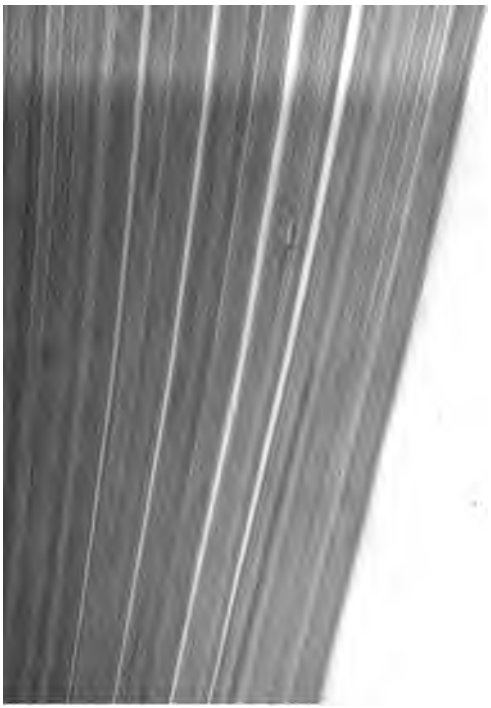
"My chief object in proposing this formidable conference is, that we may come to a perfect understanding as to the future relations that are to exist between us in our private capacity."

"I trust, Sir Hugh," said Harry, "that they will be always those of regard and confidence; and, as far as I am concerned, nothing shall be wanting to preserve them between us. I will acknowledge to you, that, from a variety of causes, which it is needless to recapitulate, I came down here with feelings very remote from cordiality, and disposed



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species of emotion,) " my dear boy, I am delighted with your candour; it is just what I should have expected from you. As to gratitude, however, you are allowing your favourable interpretation of trifles to anticipate the result of substantial experience. I trust I shall, ere long, establish some claim on your regard; as yet, however, I have none upon your *gratitude*. You have been frank with me;—it is right that I should be equally candid with you. If your feelings towards me have altered within the last few days, mine towards you have undergone a similar transformation, though perhaps not in an equal degree. It is true I had no particular prejudices of my own to overcome, having always heard you most highly spoken of; but I will own, that in requesting you to stand for Talkington, I was actuated much more by what I hope is a legitimate family pride, in wishing to maintain our connexion with the borough, than by any personal consideration



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of youth, and put to flight the utopian dreams of public virtue, in which I too *once* indulged, I could admire and appreciate the independence of your tone, and your refusal to pledge yourself to party. Since then, every thing that has passed, has tended to strengthen my favourable impression of your character and principles. Our intimacy is of recent date; but the intercourse of a few days will sometimes compensate for the estrangement of years. That estrangement is at an end;—henceforth there must be confidence between us."

Harry expressed his hearty concurrence in these friendly sentiments, and Sir Hugh continued:

"There is one subject which, I should imagine, must have excited your curiosity, but concerning which you have been too discreet to enquire. I mean my motive for retiring from the House of Commons."

"If I mistake not," said Harry, with com-



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ing my journey down here, by a communicative travelling companion in the mail. If report speaks true, you are about to be raised to the peerage!"

"The devil!" exclaimed Sir Hugh; "how these things creep out, in spite of all precautions! However, it is no matter. My chief object in keeping it close for the present was, to get over this business of the election. The House of Lords is at all times a very snug—but, at certain seasons, not a very graceful retreat for a patriot,—and I was desirous, for a variety of reasons, to make the most of my political independence in the recent contest. I was anxious, too, to save the constitutional principle,—for a peer, you know—ha! ha! ha!—must not interfere in elections!"

"I am fully impressed," said Harry, "with the importance of that salutary maxim of our glorious constitution."

"Well—but still, Harry, you have only

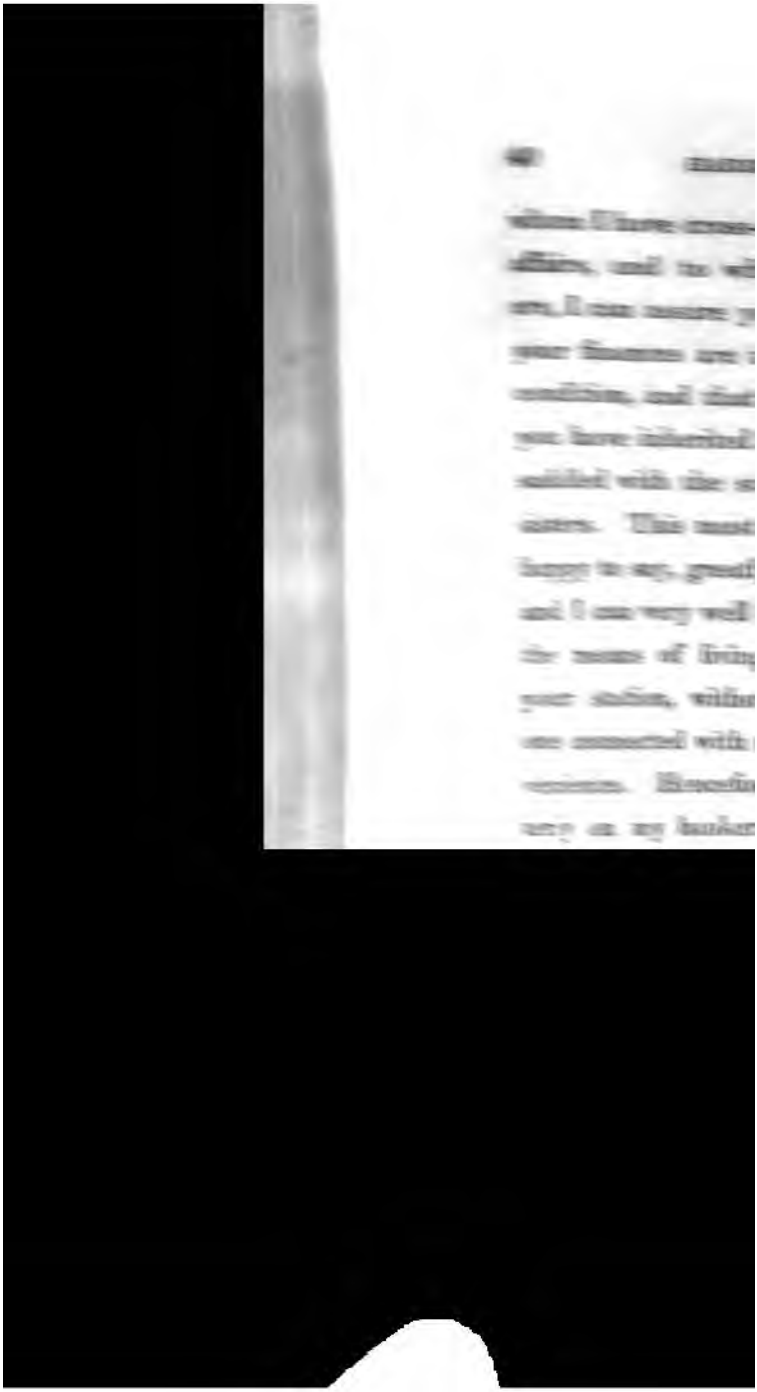


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have been glad to compound by the sacrifice of a very problematical coronet, for the certainty of succeeding to what he considered his more legitimate inheritance. But although his chance of either, was of course liable to a thousand casualties, he saw no necessity to adopt the *nolo-episcopari* system with respect to his uncle's kind intentions; he therefore at once expressed with great warmth, the gratitude which he really felt for this mark of his regard.

"Say no more, on that subject;" said Sir Hugh, "I mean to qualify the obligation to a certain extent, by keeping you out of the succession as long as I am able; but in the meantime, as we are now friends, and placed in our natural position relatively to each other, it is fitting that you should enjoy even during my life-time, some of the advantages which belong of right to an heir presumptive. I find from more than one source of information, and amongst others, from your friend Lumley,



" My dear uncle," said he, " believe me, no one can be more deeply impressed than I am, by your kindness, or more sensible of your generosity. If I could reconcile it to my feelings to trespass on the liberality of any one, for the sake of enjoying certain luxuries, with which, as a reasonable man, I can very well learn to dispense, I should not hesitate to profit by your munificent offer; but anxious as I am, to remain a free agent in my political capacity, you will readily perceive I attach a still higher value to the preservation of my *personal* independence. This cannot be maintained, if I consent to become a pensioner on your bounty; for though I do not for a moment distrust the delicacy of your behaviour towards me, or apprehend that you would avail yourself of my dependence to exercise an undue authority, still I should feel a certain restraint, which to a mind like mine, would not be the less irksome, because it might be imaginary. After all that has

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still, with rigid economy, I have the means of living like a gentleman, and that must suffice for the present. You must bear in mind, that my position as your heir-presumptive, is a very precarious one—I cannot afford to reckon upon it, nor should I act as a man of sense, in profiting by advantages, of which the birth of a son to you, may at any time deprive me."

"Well, well,—'a wilful man must have his way.' We are all as obstinate as the devil, in our family, and as to pride—you are a genuine Calverley, every inch of you! For the present, I suppose I must only leave things as they are—By-and-by, you will perhaps know me better, and treat me with more confidence.—In the meantime, although you refuse to be under any pecuniary obligation to me, you will I trust, in other respects, act towards me with the freedom and cordiality that our near relationship renders natural and

appropriate. You have contrived, most wonderfully to ingratiate yourself with Lady Mary, whose predilections are not, I assure you, at the service of every body. We shall therefore, both expect to enjoy a good deal of your society when in London, if you can spare time from your parliamentary duties. For of course, like all young politicians, you mean to regenerate society, and will labour night and day, in order to produce this *probable* and splendid result."

"I am no visionary," said Harry, laughing, "nor have I political faith enough for the working of miracles; but as politics are for the present, to be my profession, I must, of course, work hard to distinguish myself;—too happy should I find that the advancement of my private interest is not incompatible with the exercise of my public duty."

Sir Hugh shook his head. "The conflict of politics," said he, "is after all but a superior species of gambling. With every quali-

fication for public life, we are still sadly at the mercy of fortune; and the worst of it is,—that the jade seldom smiles on those who are wholly dependent on the chances of the ga However, we must hope for the best."



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Harry, however, went neither to the moors for the slaughter of woodcocks, nor to Leicestershire for the enjoyment of hunting; neither did he take up his abode at Brighton, in the hope of basking in the sunshine of royalty, nor run over to Paris, to acquire the latest fashion in politics, and moralize *en philosophe*, on the edifying submission of a "*sovereign people*," to a "*citizen king*." Full of ardour in the pursuit of his new object, parliamentary distinction, he returned to town, as to the *local* most favourable at that season, for the prosecution of those studies which demand retirement, and abstraction from the world, and applied himself seriously to the improvement of his political education, with a view of preparing himself for the ensuing campaign. Through the details of his *cours de politique*, we need not follow him; but the reader may be as-

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victim he is to his parliamentary duties. We must only hope that imperishable fame will be his reward. If there is gratitude in man, posterity must surely do justice to those who serve their country at the sacrifice of—their claret."

"It is an effort of Roman virtue, certainly," said Scalp, "on an occasion like the present; but on the other hand, there are cases, where its alleged necessity affords a graceful retreat from *boredom*. But it is the Faculty for whom I feel the most commiseration. It seems to be the *condition obligée* of rising medical popularity, to vanish with the second course. It is worthy of remark, however, that the substantial business of the day, is never interfered with in either case. No matter what momentous question 'may vex the public councils,' or what distressing epidemic may threaten the boudoirs of May Fair, the summons never arrives till *after* dinner."

"Our experience of to-day is rather



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scintillation from Ursa Major which we have had to-night. How are we to account for that, Sowerby?"

"I suppose," said Sowerby, "it is because the cloud of your friend Calverley's presence has only just rolled away from our social horizon. What the deuce is the matter with him? I never saw any man so completely down in the mouth. He was a regular wet blanket on the gaiety of the company."

"He certainly seemed very much out of spirits to-day;" said Lord Dorking, "and it was the more striking, as he is usually so cheerful; can you account for it, Lumley?"

"No," said Fitzroy, "I know of no cause he has for depression;—on the contrary, I think his rapid and unequivocal success in parliament, should have supplied him with a fund of spirits, sufficient to last through the session, at least."

"*Sans doute*," said Count Piccolomini; "*It*



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box in his hand; and as for cards, although he may not perhaps be able to say with Horne Tooke, that he does not know a *king* from a *knave*, I verily believe he could not tell the difference between ecarté, and beggar-my-neighbour, and has about as much notion of playing a rubber at shorts, as our friend Sowerby has of drawing a charitable inference."

"Does it not depend a good deal on the colour of the suit?" said Scalp,—"if he gets on but indifferently with *clubs*,—you will at least allow, that he is rather more successful with *hearts*, that is, if the ladies are not belied in his case."

"Well, well!" said Sowerby, "you may have it your own way; he may be a model of all the cardinal virtues, for aught I care."

"He has given a tolerable proof that he can practise *two* of them, at any rate," said Scalp, "for he has scarcely spoken a word to-day;—and silence is, you know, the essence

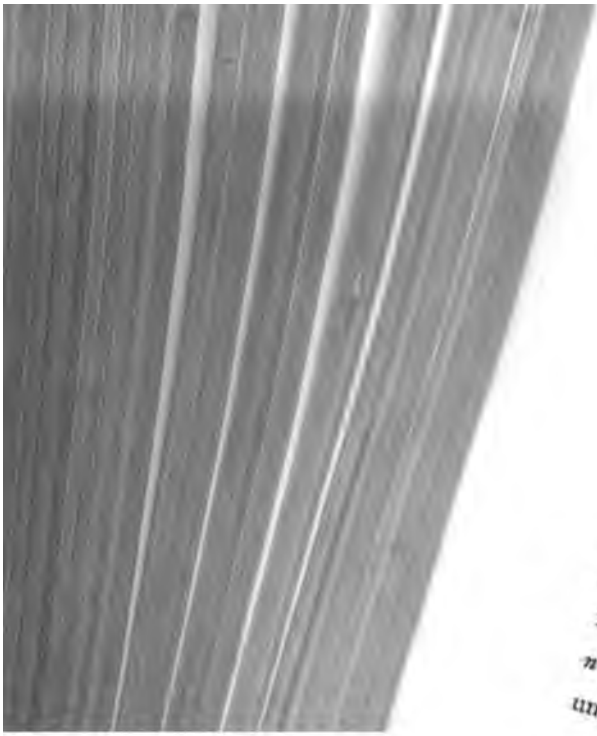
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cussion. Unfortunately however, he had regularly broken down, when half way through a speech which he had learnt by heart; since which time, he had been singularly unwilling to admit the success of any body, in a department of excellence in which *he* had failed.

"All cramming!" said Sowerby, "depend on it, there is nothing like cramming;" at the same time unconsciously suiting the action to the word, by helping himself to a pyramid of ice, and appropriating wafers for six.

"That is not quite fair, Mr. Sowerby," said Lumley,—"observe, I mean your insinuation against my friend's oratory—not your attack upon the ice. We all know that a man may be crammed up to the eyes, for a set speech; but when he speaks for an hour and a half in *reply*, as Calverley is reported to have done last week, in answer to Lord S——, what becomes of the prompter's book? I am but indifferently versed in parliamentary *etiquette*, I dare say, but I have yet to learn that



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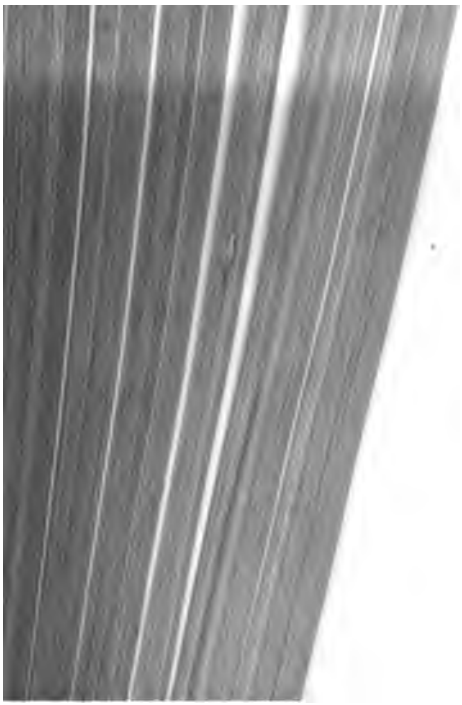
ble pretext for passing his evenings abroad, and thus escaping the whole tribe of domestic infelicities, which the holy state seems generally to entail upon its victims. But in the name of all that is overwhelming, what inducement has a bachelor,—who wants neither place, pension, nor peerage,—and who, moreover, prefers a good night's rest to all the fame dispensed by parliamentary reporters,—what inducement can *he* have to encounter the heat, the din, and, worse than all, the prosing of the honourable house? What can repay him for the head-aches unsolaced by the memory of champagne, which await him in the morning,—for the cramp which puts him in bodily fear of lumbago,—when, after yielding incautiously to the narcotic influence of the financial budget, or the often-told tale of Irish grievances,—he is roused out of his uneasy slumber, on his hard and narrow bench,—to be trotted out into the lobby,—scarcely knowing on which side he votes,



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men, that this supine spirit has not generally pervaded those classes who have hitherto considered themselves exclusively entitled to take part in public affairs.—If the gentlemen of England had all preferred the *otium*,—you will excuse me, but I can scarcely add, *cum dignitate*,—which seems to be your *summum bonum*, how should we have resisted in former times, the unprincipled encroachments of the royal prerogative;—or what chance should we have had of retaining the scanty *modicum* of freedom, which public virtue has wrested from the unwilling hands of perjured monarchs, and corrupt ministers!"

"There you have me!—I acknowledge," said Lumley. "I certainly am far from being up to *Hampden-and-Sidney* mark. The fact is, I have always considered such boisterous patriotism, as incompatible with a good stomach;—political, as well as bodily restlessness, being a natural result of indigestion.



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move;—and as for freedom, so far from being obliged to wrest it from unwilling hands, they might have had it for the asking."

"It is a pity you were not born to a throne!" said Sowerby, sneeringly.—"And yet it is not quite so certain that matters would have gone smoothly with you.—You would undoubtedly have been a most accomplished specimen of the *Roi Fainéant*;—but you might have contrived to pick up a little unpopularity notwithstanding."

"No doubt," answered Lumley, "if I were so fortunate as to secure *your* services in the capacity of *maire du palais*."

"Egad, Sowerby!" said Scalp, "you have caught a tartar."

"By no means," said Lumley. "Mr. Sowerby will acknowledge that I act strictly on the defensive. But it is really too cruel to sentence me to political annihilation. Accord-

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ley *has* a weak point, I rather suspect it will be found at the opposite extremity."

"You speak, of course, as a phrenologist," rejoined Lumley, "and I admit that, considered with relation to the sublime science in question, my *head* is obnoxious to criticism:—for, singular to relate, the development of certain moral qualities on its surface, is liable to constant fluctuation, from the effect of outward circumstances. *Par exemple*, whenever I have the felicity of finding myself in your society, it would appear that an instantaneous depression of the organ of veneration is the inevitable result;—while, no doubt from some inherent defect in the region of calculation,—the organ of self-esteem undergoes an incredible expansion, in the progress of certain involuntary comparisons, which force themselves on me during our colloquial contests."

"I told you so!" said Dorking; "it is not

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lordship, who entered amid the roar of laughter, which was benevolently vouchsafed to this sally. After all, there is nothing like good wine and good-humour, to supply all deficiencies of wit.

"*Salut, Messieurs,*" said Enniscorthy, with a comprehensive bow,—as he seated himself in Calverley's vacated chair.—"I am unfortunate in losing that last joke—but so it is, I am always destined to be too late."

"Too late for dinner, certainly," said Lord Dorking.

"And that may well be called a day after the *fare*," said Scalp.

"Glad to see you, at all events," said the host; "but what prevented you from dining with us?"

"Why, I have been all the evening, where you ought to have been also—at my post, in the house.—We had something of a debate—and a very dull one too."

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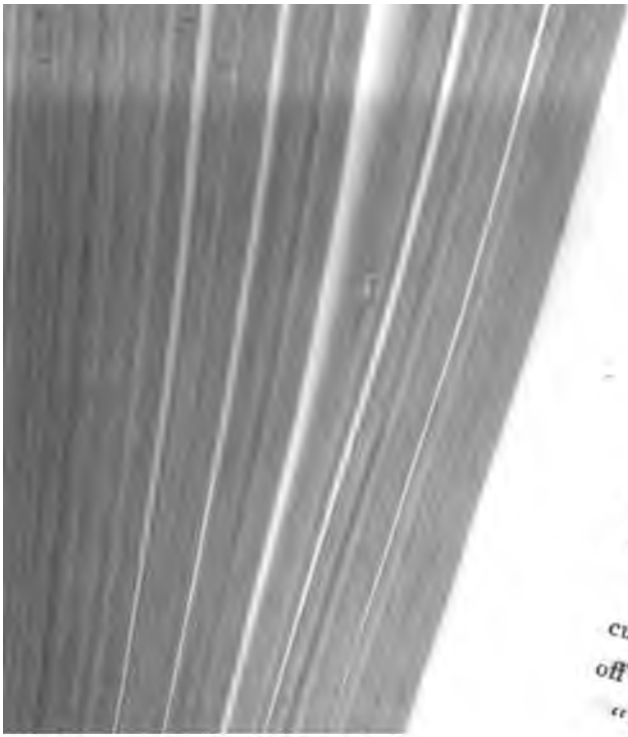
"Fact—I assure you.—I have it from what I may call the very best authority.—And a very fit man he is, too!"

"Come, come," said Dorking, laughing;—"no humbug! Enniscorthy.—We all know what that means.—He is a *very fit man*, because he is one of your invincible Calverley-and-O'Reilly phalanx:—'*nul n'aura de l'esprit, hors nous et nos amis.*'—Not that I mean to say anything against him.—He is an excellent fellow, as I was saying just now.—But how he has contrived to establish such a wonderful character for oratory, all at once,—I confess, is an enigma to me."

"He is honest!" said Lumley; "and that is a quality which always takes in public life, for a short time,—on account of its rarity."

"Ah! my dear fellow!" said Dorking; "your friends the Whigs, will soon cure him of that, when once he takes office."

"Why, surely," said Enniscorthy, "you



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"I?—how should I?" said Enniscorthy, laughing; "I am not in his secrets."

"Perhaps not—but is there not 'one fatal remembrance,' which is likely to become rather too agonizing whenever he sees your lordship?"

"Oh, ho!" said Lord Dorking; "some choice bit of scandal, no doubt!—some rivalry in an *affaire du cœur*, I hope.—Pray let us have the benefit of it, Scalp?"

"*C'est bien dit! contez nous cà!* said the count; "*Dorquin a deviné juste; n'est ce pas? Le mauvais sujet! Il flaire les amourettes, d'une lieue!*"

"*Comme de raison!*" said Lumley; "set a thief, &c."

"Gentlemen, said Enniscorthy; "I request that there may be no insinuations against my moral character.—I have an uncle a bishop,—and a first-cousin a dean!—I dined last week with Lord ******, and I have lately, at the particular request of my grandmother,

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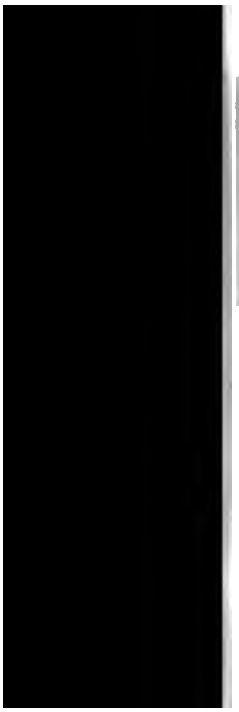
round the room.—"Come, Enniscorthy, we will take your own version of the affair."

"Scalp is there to check me, if I should depart from historical accuracy," said Enniscorthy; "and indeed he is personally concerned in the affair—a *particeps criminis*—I was going to say—but I should rather call him a co-operator in a great work of poetical justice.—You remember, Lumley, the party assembled at Calverley last autumn, during the election."

"Yes—a pleasant set enough—the present company *not* excepted;" said Lumley.

"Well—you will also recollect that, although the systematic impertinence and incivility of our friend Sowerby, were tolerably *piquantes* at first,—every one of the party got rather tired of him in a short time."

"I can answer for myself," said Lumley; "and indeed I had not been four-and-twenty hours in his company, before I was reluctantly



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age, and our fat friend Aylmer, who, you know, is but an indifferent hand at repartee, and, generally speaking, would sacrifice everything in the world, not excepting his wife, for the sake of peace and quiet. But Scalp and I had certain arrears to settle with our facetious friend, and with a little persuasion, we contrived to enlist the other two in our project for a final settlement."

"Here I must be allowed to correct your lordship," said Scalp; "you do me too much honour in assigning to me any share in the preliminary proceedings. The whole merit of the design, as well as the arrangement, was exclusively yours;—and to say the truth, it was not without considerable difficulty that I was prevailed upon to assist in its execution."

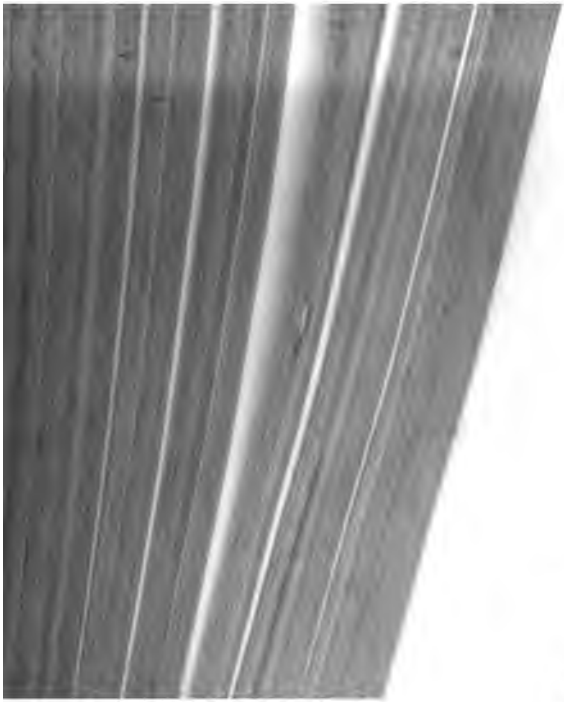
"Well, well—it may be so," said Lord Enniscorthy; "and I have no objection to claim all the credit of the affair; although I was liberally anxious to allow you a fair

monstrance, old Sowerby was seized by the arms and legs, and spread out on a capacious blanket which had been secreted under the table. We all set to *with a will*, as they say on board ship, and if we did not give him exercise enough for one evening, he must certainly have had a very strange taste for involuntary feats of activity!"

"Bravo, bravo!" exclaimed *omnes*, with enthusiasm.

"But how did he bear the operation?" enquired Dorking.

"His rage at first beggared all description," answered Lord Enniscorthy; "he absolutely foamed at the mouth, and got so black in the face, that we were obliged to loosen his neckcloth, lest he should go off in a fit of apoplexy. But after a hard struggle between prudence and anger, he made up his mind to treat the affair as a joke; and we repaired to the drawing-room, to all appearance, the best friends in the world. You may be sure



"But come, gentlemen, if you will not drink any more wine, let us have coffee, and be off to Lady Belvedere's:—for I suppose you all mean to patronize her ball to-night."

"Hush! my dear Dorking!" said Lumley. "You should respect the count's feelings."

This considerate observation was followed by a general roar of laughter. But the count was a genuine philosopher, of the most imperturbable class.

"*Que voulez-vous?*" said he, shrugging his shoulders. "*Miladi m'a envoyé promener; et je ne m'en cache pas. Elle ne veut pas de moi pour mari,—et je ne saurais qu'y faire. Cependant, puisqu'elle a bien voulu me prier à cette fête,—ma foi!—je tâcherai de m'y amuser comme un autre!*"

"The count will not die of love, this time, at all events," said Scalp, aside to Lumley.

"No wonder!" said Fitzroy. "He has since discovered that the jointure ceases, if Lady Belvedere marries again!"



"Oh dear yes! I have just had the most delightful galope with Count Piccolomini. What a nice person he is! I do so doat on his broken English, and then he *galopes* like an angel! But how is it that I have not seen anything of Captain Calverley to-night—is he gone?"

"He has not been here at all," answered Lady Belvedere, with as much indifference of manner as she could assume.

"Indeed—oh, then, my dear Cary, I understand why you are too conscientious to dance."

Lady Belvedere did not think it necessary to make any reply to this insinuation, and she had fortunately the excuse of being occupied in receiving a new arrival who made his appearance at the moment.

"You are very late, Mr. St. John," said she to the *nouveau venu*.

"Most provokingly so," said he. "But your ladyship will easily guess that it is not my fault. We have had an interminable debate—

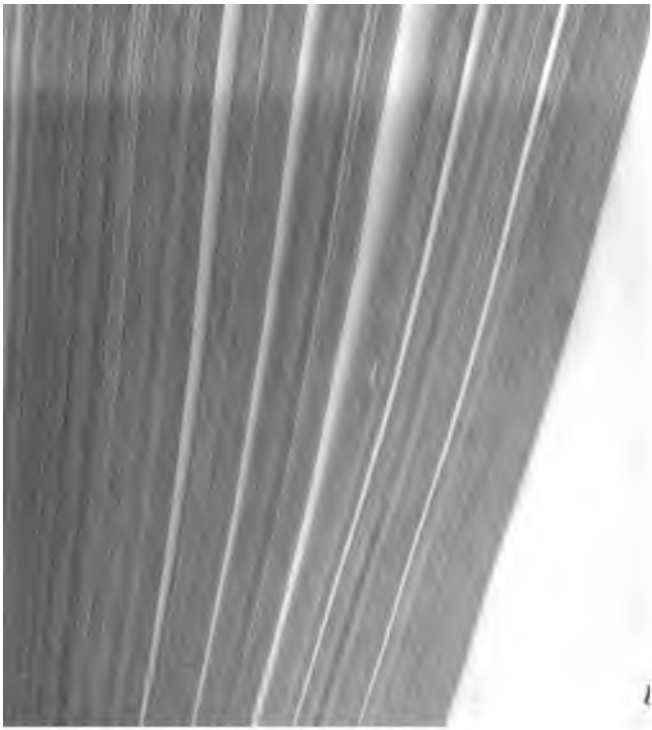


timised by some talkative elderly gentleman or other, who was congratulating him on his new appointment, and as I saw no chance of his button being released for the next half hour, I left him to his fate."

"What appointment?" enquired Lady Belvedere.

"Have you not heard? he is the new Under Secretary:—*mais, chut!*—here he is."

Harry made his appearance accordingly; but in spite of the momentary gleam of satisfaction which shot across his features, as he approached to pay his respects to our lovely hostess,—it did not escape her notice that he wore an aspect but little in accordance with his recent parliamentary triumph, or his reported official advancement. The contraction of his brow, and the care-worn expression of his countenance, were too evident to be overlooked even by an uninterested observer; and Lady Belvedere was almost startled to trace the lines of gloom and despondency, where the



pressive a silence—and for a moment his gloom was dispelled.

"I am afraid it is a forlorn hope," said he, "but have I any chance of finding you disengaged for the quadrille which is now forming?"

"I have declined dancing to-night, hitherto," said Lady Belvedere; hesitatingly, "as I did not wish to desert my post, but—"

"It is quite time to begin then," interrupted he, "your friends are all arrived by this hour, I dare say; therefore you have no excuse."—

So saying, he held out his arm, which Lady Belvedere did not refuse to take, in spite of the very significant and *malin* look that Miss Caryl directed towards her, and they proceeded to join the dancers.

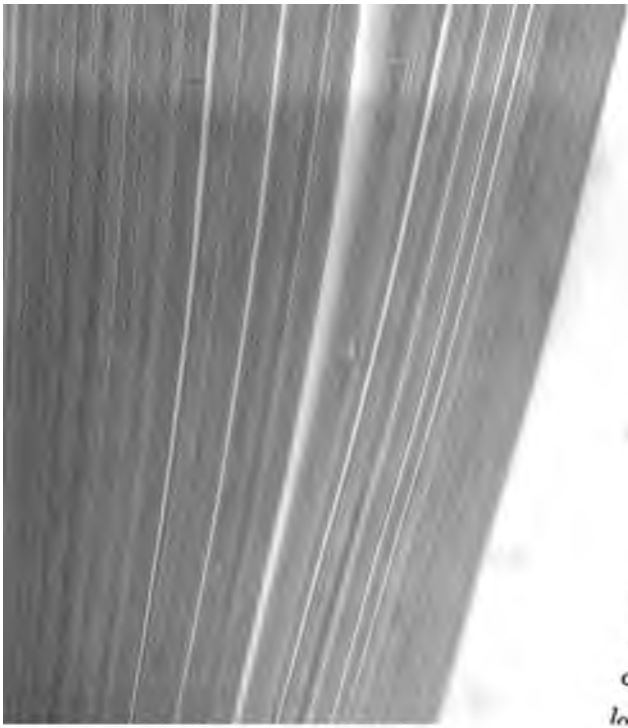
On their way to the ball-room, they passed a gentleman leaning against a column, with his arms folded on his breast, in moody abstraction, or perhaps in philosophical contem-



factory and cheering information respecting the state of feeling between the parties.—The same words, slightly varied in tone and accentuation, might have betrayed jealousy, pique, resentment;—but under the circumstances, no lover *could* have uttered them in *that* tone and with that uninterested aspect.

"By the by," said Lady Belvedere, "I ought to have enquired whether *you* were a dancer.—If you ever do condescend so far as to join in a quadrille, perhaps you will allow me to find you a *danseuse*, and you can be our *vis-à-vis*."

"No, thank you," said Vesey, "I never dance when I can avoid it. I took pity on one or two wall-flowers of my acquaintance in the beginning of the evening, when *beaux* were scarce, but I think I may fairly superannuate myself now; and to tell you the truth, I am growing very sleepy—So I fancy the best thing I can do, is to go home to bed."



of the gallant colonel's stomach, it was evident that his *heart* was tolerably secure.

But in spite of the removal of all his jealous doubts, a cloud still hung over Calverley's brow. He was evidently *distrait*. He spoke but little, and seemed almost as incapable of following the movements of the dance, as of keeping up the conversation, for which it afforded so convenient an opportunity. Lady Belvedere was totally at a loss to account for his silence and abstraction; and considering how very rarely they had met since the period of the Talkington election—for she had wintered at Brighton and Paris, and was but recently arrived in London for the season,—she was disposed to feel a little offended at his apparent indifference to her society. It was mortifying to suppose that he was insensible to the flattering preference with which she had distinguished him, even at the risk of offending many others, by selecting him as her partner, after refusing half the men in the room. But



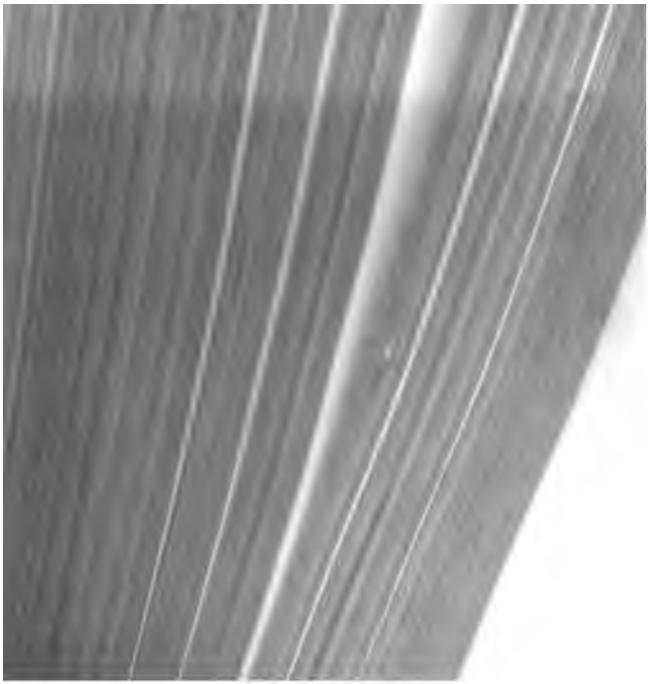
trust that it may prove so. I know you are not sanguine, but you must not despond, or be too impatient of the regular course of events. You have already achieved a degree of fame which ought, I think, to satisfy your ambition for the present. But that is not all. If we may believe report, you are on the high road to fortune, and what your sex, I believe, value still more highly,—power."

"It seems to me that I am farther than ever from *happiness*;" rejoined Calverley, gloomily. "But do not mistake me. It is no morbid or grasping spirit of ambition,—no unreasonable impatience at the tardy progress of my advancement in public life, that causes the depression of spirits to which I plead guilty. I should, indeed, very much overrate my own claims, were I not to acknowledge that my short career in parliament has been far more prosperous than I had any right to expect. I am aware that I have nothing to complain of on the score of fame; and as to fortune, I do

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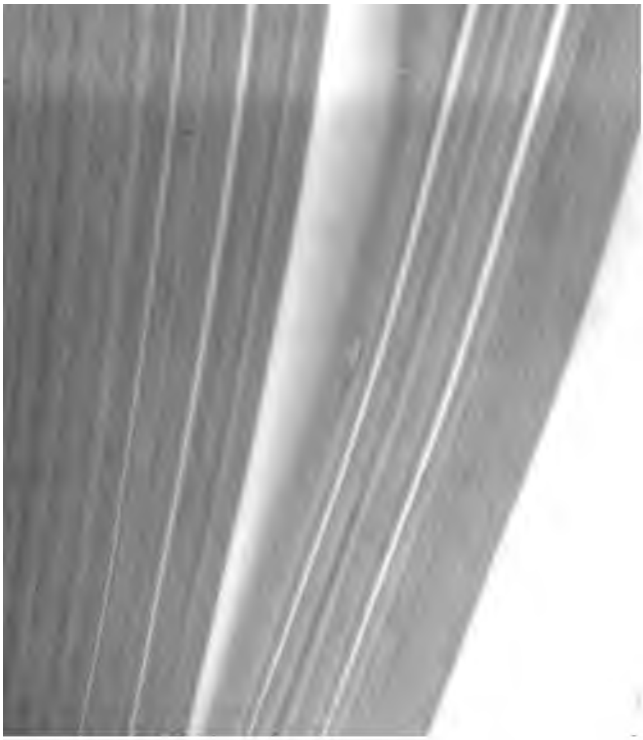
have led to your determination, I can only say that, as a friend, I regret your disappointment; although, as a woman, I am, I fear, but ill qualified to enter into the feelings which actuate your sex in these matters, and seem often to render the excitement of political warfare necessary to your existence. I confess, I should consider the constant labour, the mental and bodily fatigue, the continued anxiety, and inevitable mortifications attendant on even the most successful career of a public man, but ill repaid by the fleeting popularity which an unguarded word, a conscientious vote, may at any time endanger,—or even by the possession of power, which at any moment may be wrested from your grasp. If the pursuits of private life afford less scope for distinction—less food for vanity—*en revanche* they supply more solid materials for happiness."

"That may be true," said Calverley, "of those who are influenced by the ordinary motives that regulate the choice of a career;—



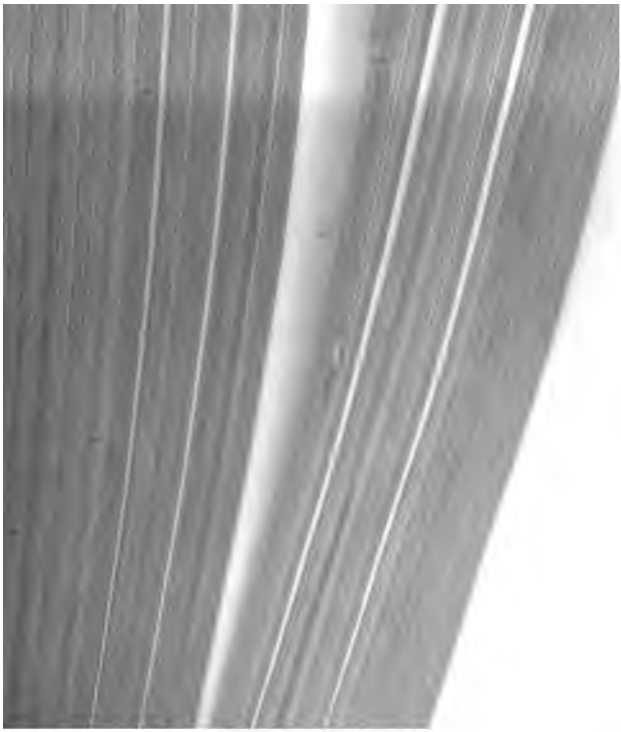
might afford some compensation for the sacrifices which I vainly hoped, I might one day be in a situation to solicit,—sacrifices, which it would now be madness, or rather baseness, to require. This is the hope that has stimulated my exertions,—this the ray of light that has cheered me on. And you, who alone are acquainted with the secret motive of my ambition, can alone appreciate the bitterness of my disappointment."

Lady Belvedere answered not; but as Calverley watched her varying colour and agitated look—he read in those mute evidences of the state of her feelings—the assurance of her sympathy, and the encouragement of his own hopes. Caroline was, indeed, ill prepared to discuss a subject of such painful and embarrassing interest. After all that had passed, she could not affect to misunderstand Calverley's observations, or repel by coldness the expression of an attachment which her own conduct towards him had latterly appeared to



But the motive which had dictated and hallowed the sacrifice, existed no longer. Her benefactress was no more. Death had also relieved her from an inauspicious engagement; henceforward, sole mistress of her destiny, and in her isolated position, unbiassed by any consideration distinct from her own interests and wishes,—if she was not absolutely insensible to the *prestige* of that pomp and affluence by which she was surrounded,—yet how gladly would she have resigned them in exchange for humble competency,—to secure in a more suitable alliance that unity of feeling, that mutual dependence of affection which, after all, must be ever the chief basis of happiness in married life!

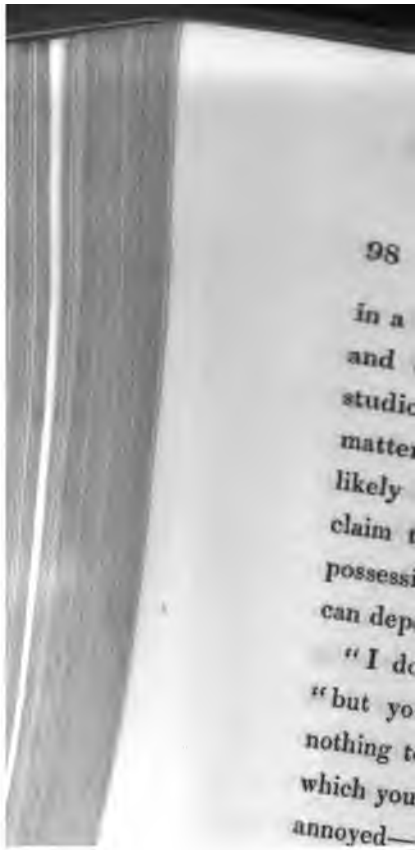
To feel all this, however, and to express it, were not exactly one and the same thing. Prepared as she certainly was, to bestow on our hero that proof of devoted attachment which the sacrifice of her jointure in a second marriage would establish beyond a doubt,



hostess, to relinquish our hero's arm, without giving him any audible assurance of her sincere sympathy, in reply to the concluding appeal which he had made to her feelings, Harry felt that there was nothing disheartening in her silence; and as he seated himself on an ottoman as far apart from the rest of the company as possible, with a view of indulging a vein of melancholy musing, which existing circumstances were but too well calculated to produce, his despondency was not altogether uncheered by some reflections of a consolatory character.

But "sweet," or "bitter," as might be the fancies of which he "chewed the cud," he was not left long to their solitary enjoyment; for Fitzroy Lumley, who had been no inattentive observer of his depression during dinner, and since his appearance at the ball, approached with his usual air of listless imperturbability, and seated himself beside our hero.

"For God's sake, my dear Harry," said he



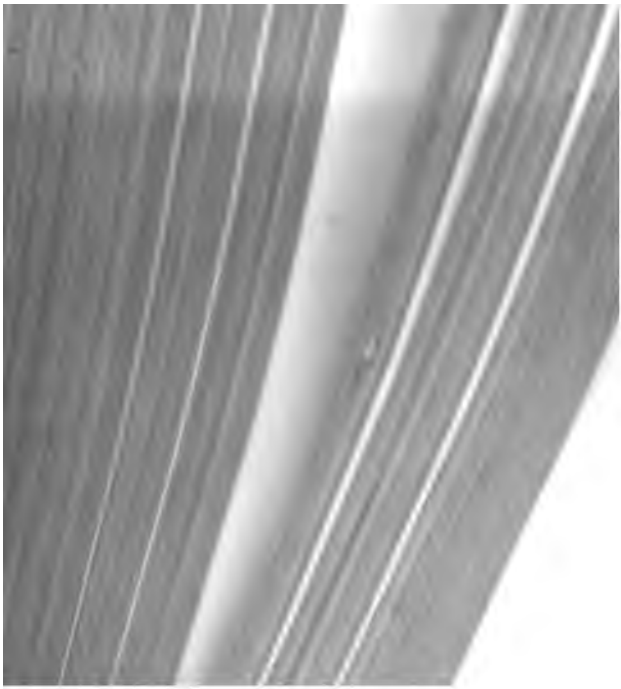
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she was regularly established as chief aide-de-camp on duty, or rather, perhaps, we should say, second in command, she deemed herself especially required to make vigorous efforts in the recruiting line; and thus the principle of duty was called in to enforce that activity both of feet and tongue, which certainly required no such additional stimulus.

As, leaning on Lord Enniscorthy, whom she had inveigled into a waltz, the fair Julia was sauntering through the passage-room where our two friends were, she stopped with the laudable intention of rebuking the inactive and quadrille-hating Lumley.

"Oh! there you are, Captain Lumley! What have you to say for yourself, for being so shockingly lazy to-night? You are a sad person—indeed you are."

"*Grace! Grace!* Lady Fair," answered Fitz, resuming at once his tone of *persiflage;* "have compassion on my increasing years. Age is venerable, and entitled to be indolent.

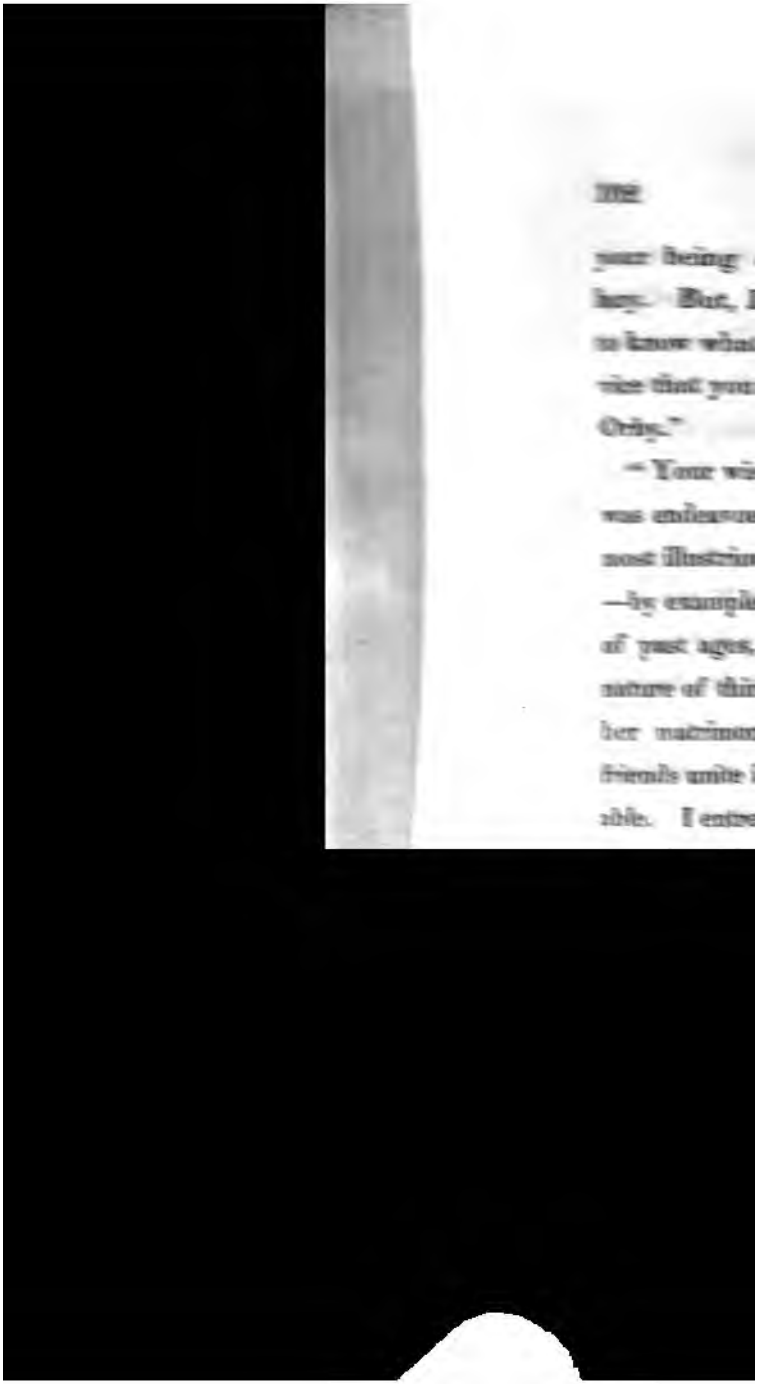


those venerable pretensions that you are so benevolently unwilling to admit. Nothing could be more edifying than our conversation. On my side, indeed, it was absolutely paternal; and really the mass of good advice, which I contrived to concentrate in the few sentences I have had the courage to address to her this evening, in spite of the distressing comments of a scandal-loving world—would, if properly beaten out and amplified, supply a very pretty little *cours de morale, à l'usage des femmes mariées.*"

"I suspect you mean *à l'usage des garçons, et aux dépens des maris,*" said Lord Enniscorthy. "We all know you of old, Master Lumley, as the very Mephistopheles of a ball-room."

"Excuse me, my dear lord! Mephistopheles, if I recollect right, flirted with elderly ladies; and that *I* never do. Miss Caryl, even, will bear witness to that."

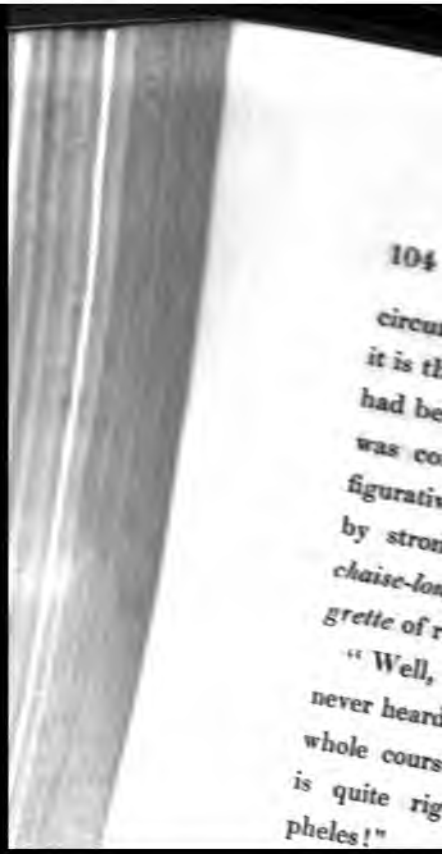
"I will bear witness to nothing, except to



it, dearest Mrs. Orby,' said I, 'twenty or thirty years will make a wonderful difference. He'll not be the same man;—or if he is, you will have become so completely accustomed to his *manière d'être*, and will care so little about him, that it will amount to the same thing.'"

"Lord Enniscorthy! Did you ever! —— You horrid creature!—I declare I quite hate you!—Well, go on."

"The rest of my exhortation was in a similar spirit, and directed to the same point; and I wound up by observing,—that as she had been imprudent enough to put into the matrimonial lottery, where, unfortunately, except in Greece and Poland, there is no such thing as a *sixteenth*, to let one down easily,—but you are obliged to take a whole ticket—(by the by, I was very near quoting the American phrase of '*going the whole hog*,'—but I was afraid she might think it *personal* to Orby!)—'under the



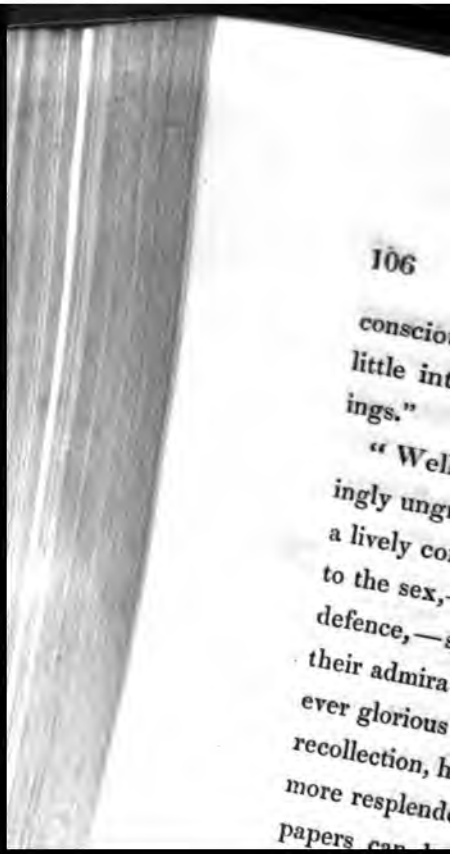
Mrs. Orby;—but suppose you tell us what Mrs. Orby said to you?"

"That is a species of question, noble earl, that, in ordinary cases, might prove as embarrassing as it is unquestionably indiscreet. But

> 'There are no terrors, Cassius, in thy *sneers*—
> For I am armed too strong in honesty,' &c.

Fortunately for myself, and still more fortunately for the injured and calumniated Mrs. Orby, her communications were chiefly restricted to a subject which, I have no doubt, Miss Caryl will agree with me in considering as one of the very highest interest to the world at large, and the fair sex in particular. Mrs. Orby has been detailing to me the proceedings of her illustrious and all-subduing brother, Lord Belvedere, since his last departure from England."

"Indeed!" said the fair Julia, with a slight toss of the head, and a tinge of embarrassed



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it appears, to enlist him as their chief in an effort to regain their independence,—and endeavoured to bribe him by the promise of the Archbishopric of Gnesne, and the Grand Generalship of Lithuania. But his personal regard for the Emperor Nicholas, and some conscientious scruples about the restoration of the *liberum veto*, induced him to decline; so that the only trophy he carries away from that interesting country, is a hair watch-guard, *en manière de chaine*,—composed of thirty links, each link being formed of the hair of a separate Polish princess! Mrs. Orby begged that I would excuse the enumeration of the names, lest she should be supposed to have taken an exorbitant pinch of Masulipatam,—and alarm the company by the reiterated sternutations which characterize the national nomenclature."

"Well, I'm sure!—Captain Lumley!—How *can* you ——?"

"Nay," said Lumley; "you may go and

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counts, at Constantinople; and strange to say, has not yet got admittance either into the Harem or the Seven Towers! He is delighted with the climate; but declares that, at night, which is his chief time for walking or riding—the glare of the moonlight is so intense, that he cannot venture out without a *paralune*, to save his eyes and complexion."

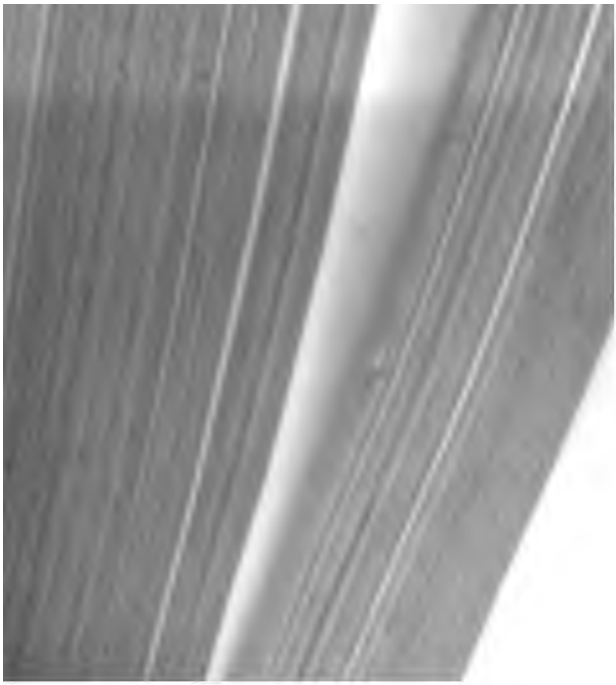
The sound of the waltz now reached the ear of Miss Caryl, and with renewed exclamations of—"Did you ever!"—"You horrid person!" &c. &c. She walked the passive Enniscorthy off to the ball-room.

Lumley looked round for Harry, who had left the ottoman at the commencement of a conversation in which he felt no interest, and the tone of which ill accorded with the state of his spirits. But he was not to be seen; and after walking through the rooms in search of him, Lumley came to the conclusion that he had gone home.



CHAPTER V.

We need scarcely say that Lumley was not habitually a very early riser, although as a subaltern in His Majesty's Foot Guards, he was occasionally obliged to turn out at an unseasonable hour, for the enjoyment of that agreeable pastime, denominated "Morning Practice;" and as he gave every body credit for a similar disinclination to that odious ceremony of getting up, the diurnally-recurring necessity of which is certainly not the least distressing among the minor miseries of human life, he seldom invaded the domicile of any



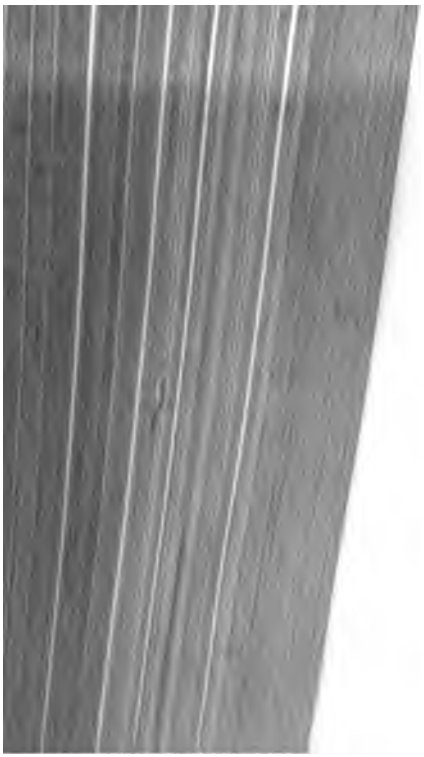
noticed and unfolded on the table, although that leading organ of popular opinion contained a lengthened report of his last night's speech, interspersed with numerous repetitions of that useful little parliamentary interjection, the meaning of which is so expressively marked and diversified by the inflexions of the voice.

Lumley drew a chair, and sate down opposite to him.

"Harry," said he, "there is something the matter with you; and there is no use in denying it. You wouldn't tell me what it was last night; so here I am this morning;—and I now give you fair notice, that from this spot I don't stir, until you have satisfied my curiosity on that point."

"My dear Fitzroy, I assure you,"—Harry began.

"Come, now, no protestations—no disclaimers, if you please;" interrupted Lumley; "for they won't answer your purpose, my dear fellow. But as you will not be communicative,



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But seriously, my dear Harry, if neither of these causes occasions your depression, I have but one alternative left in my conjectures; and that, I think, affords me the only possible explanation of your obstinate refusal to admit me into your confidence. I will now just ask you, do you look upon me as a friend?"

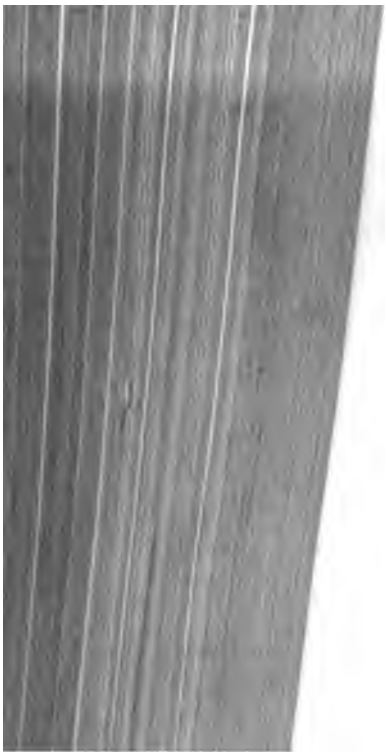
"How can you put such a question to me, Lumley?" said Harry, seizing his hand, and grasping it with warmth.

"Why, I should have thought it, indeed, unnecessary, after an intimacy of nearly twenty years' standing. But what am I to think, if you hesitate for a moment to put my regard to the test? Now listen to me, and pray don't interrupt me till I have said my say. You are suffering from some pecuniary embarrassment, Harry,—I am sure you are—from no fault of your own, I can well believe,—as I know your prudence and your strictness of principle;—but I also know that you have heavy and distressing claims upon your too restricted in-

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is it that from a feeling of misplaced pride, you can hesitate to claim the assistance of my *purse* to the utmost, when you know my heart is your own. I am as proud as yourself, Harry,—but I trust I shall never be proud in the wrong place. Were our relative situations to be reversed, I protest most solemnly that I would this moment act as I am urging you to do, without the slightest feeling of humiliation, and with a full consciousness of your regard which I should take a pride in shewing:—and now, for God's sake, my dear fellow, away with this confounded reserve, and give me some proof of the friendship you have always professed for me. I have five thousand pounds at my banker's lying idle,—any portion, or the whole of which, is at your service at a moment's notice. If it were twice the sum, you know you would be welcome to it. So clear up that woe-begone countenance of yours, and pitch the Jews to Old Nick!"

This speech, so much to the point, and de-



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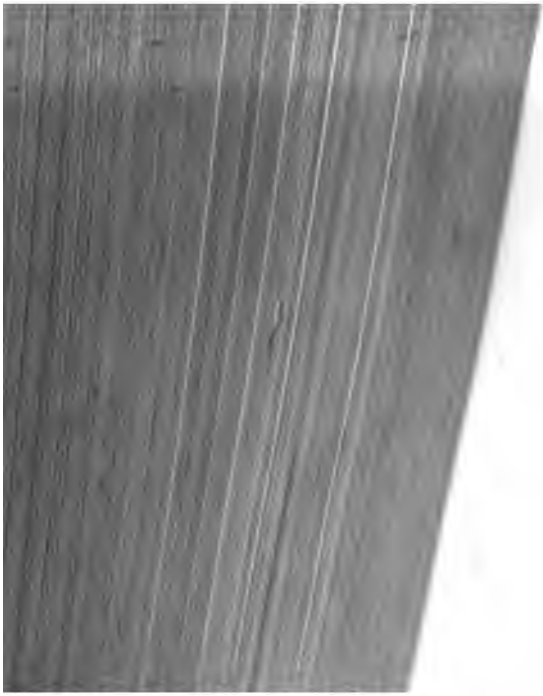
my life and my honour were at stake;—and in saying this, I must add that you are the only man living to whom I would apply in such an emergency. But, thank God! I am out of debt, and so far out of danger. My depression has no immediate reference to money;—for poor as I certainly am, I have hitherto contrived to accommodate my expenditure to my means. If I have postponed a confidence, to which, on every account, you are so justly entitled,—it is not that I mistrusted your discretion, or entertained any doubt of the interest you feel in whatever concerns me. On the contrary, it was because I feared lest your friendship might warp the correctness of your judgment in a matter that seriously affects my future destiny; and I was unwilling to expose myself to the danger of being dissuaded from what I feel to be my duty. Such as it is, however, I can no longer refuse to communicate this important secret. After all, you will think, perhaps, that I have been fretting my-

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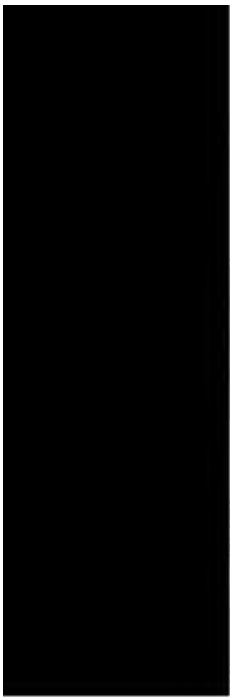
to the estimate I have formed of my duty; and your candour will, I am sure, make allowance for the motive, although your judgment may condemn the proceeding.

"You will recollect that when, by your powerful interest, I was returned to parliament, I distinctly stated to you that I did not consider myself pledged to the unconditional support of the party who possessed your confidence; and that I should only act with that party so long as their measures were such as I could conscientiously approve. To this declaration on my part, you made no objection; conceiving, perhaps, that from the general accordance of my political feelings with the principles of the ministerial party, their decision on all matters of importance might carry with it sufficient weight to counterbalance half-formed doubts, and induce me to yield where my private opinion was not the result of a mature and settled conviction. In many instances, the fact has been so;—and without,



vancement in the career of an honourable ambition.—But, alas! within that period, my flattering dreams have been dispelled. The policy of government with respect to the —— question, as recently announced by ministers, is in direct opposition to my feelings and principles. On this point, they cannot have my conscientious support,—and on this point, consequently, as an honest man, I am bound to oppose them.

"It is true, as I have stated above, that, in entering the House under your auspices, I reserved to myself the rights of an independent member; and, had my obligations to you been limited to the arrangement of an electioneering transaction, conducted, on both sides, in the spirit of our separate vanity and ambition (which, I confess, is the aspect under which it presented itself to me at first) I might perhaps, appeal to the letter of my engagement, and assert the independence so stipulated. But your conduct towards me, from the day of my arrival at Calverley Hall,—the frankness



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against the party with whose political views your own are now completely identified,—it is my intention to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and by my retirement from parliament, place the representation of Talkington once more at your disposal, to be filled by some one who may not endanger your relations with the ministry, by what might be considered an unwarrantable act of insubordination.

"I cannot entertain a doubt, that, under the circumstances, you will approve of this decision. I shall of course, however, not take any step in the matter, until I have heard from you; and, in the meantime, with best regards to Lady Calverley, whose health, I trust, is still farther improving,

"I remain, my dear Uncle,

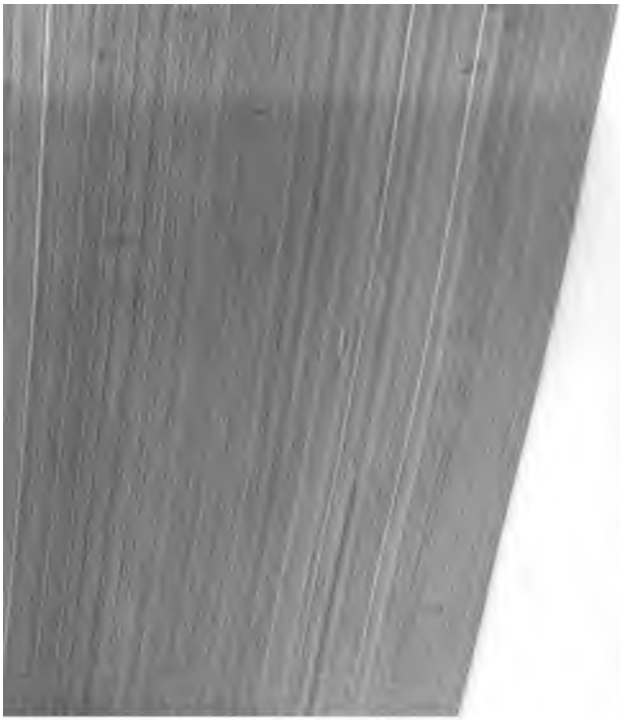
"Your much obliged,

"And affectionate nephew,

"HARRY CALVERLEY."

"For the Lord Calverley,"

&c. &c. &c.



"Not at all, my dear fellow—I judge of the individual according to the characteristics of the species;—a mode of reasoning which, you will allow, is logically correct. But I meant nothing personal, and merely gave you the philosophy of politics. As to yourself, you are a splendid exception; and like most of those who hesitate to '*hurler avec les loups*,' you are fated to become a martyr. To say that, in your position, I should do the same, but ill expresses my estimate of the extent of your virtue. Independent in circumstances,—satisfied with my prospects, indolent and devoid of political ambition, as I acknowledge myself to be, I could have no motive for acting otherwise. But you—you have indeed made a sacrifice which I am scarcely worthy to appreciate."

"Ah!" said Harry, "if the interest of my ambition alone were at stake, the sacrifice would not be worth talking about.

"There, I do not agree with you, my good



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pects, you have only to watch your opportunity: —vacancies are constantly occurring; and if you find an open place, by which, I suppose, we must understand a place that is open to the highest bidder,—after what I have just said, you know where to find the money, and may come into the House as independent of party, as you will be of your constituents. Come, now! don't shake your head—you know I mean what I say;—and so much for your ambition! As to your affair of the heart, if that is really paramount, I think your case is by no means desperate."

"Indeed!—I wish to Heaven you could prove your words!"

"Perhaps I can.—And to begin;—you will acknowledge that there is not much difficulty to be apprehended, on the score of the lady's inclinations."

"Why, I hardly know—I sometimes flatter myself"—

"You sometimes flatter yourself!—My dear



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"I will tell you prese
to deny that the combinat

petrated.—I could wish that the doctrine of purgatory were considered orthodox, for I should certainly find in my heart to give the old reprobate an *extra grill* of a hundred years or so.—However, *passe pour celà.* Do you really believe that Lady Belvedere, with all her advantages of youth, beauty, and accomplishments, has made up her mind to abjure the delights of matrimony for the remainder of her natural life?"

"I should be still more wretched than I am, if I could think so," said Harry.

"Of course—and can you doubt that she would willingly sacrifice two-thirds of her income to secure a good husband?"

"But, my dear fellow, she must sacrifice it *all*, if she marries again."

"*D'accord.* But it does not follow that the aforesaid good husband, who, you will observe, is only a speculative entity, not intended by any means as a prophetic impersonation of your connubial claims and merits,



you could not have fur
vincing proof that your
good husband had no re
cular pretensions."

"There again, you are
lent friend, and most dea
I ask you seriously, do
rather than remain single,
thousand a-year, Lady Be
on fifteen hundred?—If sl
a case where her affection
is not the woman I take he

"But granting all tha
"where, in Heaven's nam
fifteen hundred a-year?"

"You have

directly connected with the ministry, and sharing, more or less, in the responsibility of its acts,—why not make a push for something snug and permanent,—that would ensure you a comfortable income, and not oblige you to interfere in politics at all? Surely, with your uncle's interest, so much might be achieved for a man in your position, and with your expectations."

"There is no certainty of that;—and, at all events, I hate asking favours."

"Then you had better give up the chase at once," said Lumley; "for this is not a world where there is much to be had without asking for it. Lord Calverley, with his two votes in the House of Lords, and as many in the Commons, reckoning your successor for Talkington, must play his cards very ill, if he cannot get you made a commissioner of something or other, with a salary of a thousand or twelve hundred a year for doing little or nothing. Why, if I were in his place, I would undertake



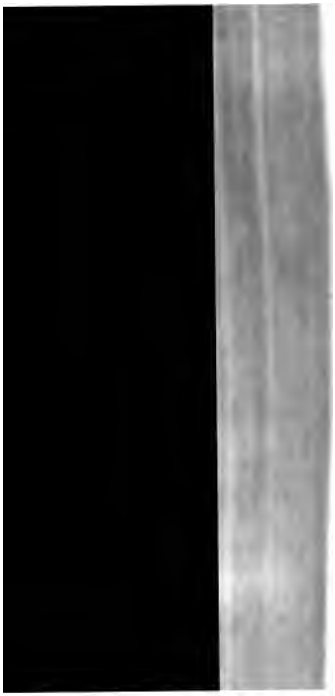
causes of the increase in
ing,—and for the bette
Game Laws,—and you
chairman."

"Ah," said Calverley
"those days are gone by

"I am sorry to find yo
ing politician, Harry,"
for my part, *quasi-tory* a
confidence in the stability
Jobs have been, and, ple
to the end of the chapter
would a patriot have to e
the cares of office?"

CHAPTER VI.

HAVING dispatched his letter to Lord Calverley, Harry awaited with patience and resignation the answer which was to seal his parliamentary doom. He was not altogether insensible to the motives of consolation which Lumley had urged;—and although he was far from entertaining such sanguine notions as to the feasibility of his extra-senatorial advancement,—he endeavoured to eke out his scanty stock of philosophy, by familiarizing himself as much as possible, with the view of the question taken by his friend. But alas! the train



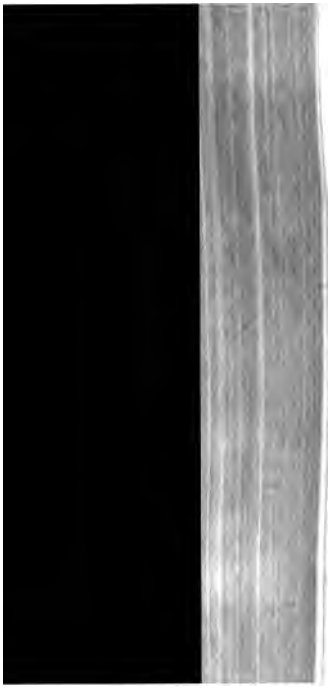
...rrying hints, as
...elings, which, on so
...ised a good deal of i
himself.

The more he ponde
his retirement from p
scious he became of th
which, however it ma
pressed by considerati
passion, will not fail t
claims, when the cause
it for a time subservien
votion to Lady Belve
predominant feeling
could he form any proj
piness with which her

forded of their ultimate union, that he lamented the necessity under which he had found himself of declining office and vacating his seat. But there were times, when he felt that to one who had so early distinguished himself in parliament,—one whose prospects of fame, if not of fortune, were so bright and exhilarating, the abandonment of this promising career was, in itself, a bitter sacrifice.

We fear that this acknowledgment of our hero's participation in the frailties of human, or perhaps we should rather say, of *male* nature, will not raise his character in the eyes of those fair readers who think that the world was well lost for love;—and that all ambition, save that of military glory, for which, since the days of chivalry downwards, he has enjoyed a special dispensation, is misplaced and derogatory in a hero of romance! But alas! how truly, as well as beautifully has Byron said:—

> "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart—
> 'Tis woman's whole existence,"——



affectionate, as man
belonging to the mo
species, not exempt f
inaccessible to the t
the vanity of the sex;–
it may be sometimes
the comparative magn
the objects which call
theless the same feeli
women,—differing me
degree, but exercisin
powerful influence on
theirs.

And yet, if this feel
which we are not pr
much as, under one c

it into existence, and the dazzling triumphs of the senatorial career serve to stimulate and sustain it. To act a conspicuous part, on the great theatre of human events,—to appear in the foremost rank, as an intellectual gladiator, in that splendid arena, where the destinies of millions are often dependent on the issue of the contest, and the whole of the civilized world spectators of the fray,—this is an object which affords, in its pursuit, no paltry incentive to exertion,—in its attainment, no ignoble source of pride! Nor is it to be wondered at, if this *prestige* should survive almost every other illusion;—if even those whose social spirit is quelled by care and disappointment,—whose hearth may have been made desolate by domestic calamity, are still keenly alive to the attractions of a scene, the excitement of which is the most brilliant, if not the most effectual substitute for happiness.

Harry was not destined to be kept long in suspense as to the effect produced on Lord



by return of post; and th
rienced how much of hap
hope or despair,—freque
postman's knock, and the
sheet of paper, need not
with a beating heart an
that he tore open the en
follows:

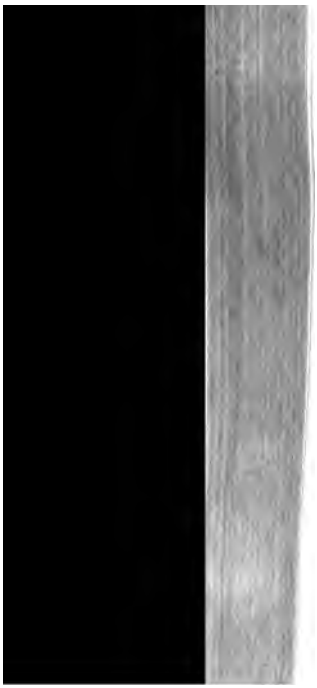
" *Most Private.*

" *Calverley Ha*

" My dear Harry,

" It would be uncandid
the contents of your lett
though they have not, as
pate, offended me. Inde

own political prospects, than to any annoyance which I have personally experienced, in consequence of the withdrawal of your support from ministers in the present crisis. In the conflict of politics, as in physical warfare, he who would render his prowess effective, must make up his mind to enlist under a banner, and co-operate with others, in due subordination to the will of his chief. Party, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary by theorists and visionaries,—party is essential to the management of public affairs. It is a species of machinery, without whose operation no political good can ever be effected;—and every practical man,—which, in these affairs, I take to be a convertible term with a man of sense, must, I conceive, see the propriety of sacrificing his own private opinions or prejudices, in matters of detail, to ensure the triumph of those *general principles*, which his party represent and sustain. This view of the question is perfectly consistent with the purest patriotism, and as



less exalted, but usual
of personal ambition,
lect that he who woul
starting, be content to

"I have said this
rather with a view o
unprofitable Quixotism
than with any idea of
tion with respect to th
now proceed to busines

"I need not say tha
honourable and upright
that part of your letter
continuance in parliamen
pretation of a compact
which you were certainl

your seat. On the contrary, it is my wish and my request that you retain it.

"Many considerations combine to render your meditated opposition to the government on the —— question, less embarrassing to me than you appear to apprehend; and, indeed, but for the footing upon which you put it, I should have been content to consider this act of insubordination on your part, as an allowable exception to a general rule. In the first place, I am not personally pledged to the support of ministers in so unequivocal a manner as you may suppose. The distinction conferred upon me, I am, I conceive, entitled to consider as a reward for past services, rather than a retaining fee for the future;—and, at all events, any implied pledge will be sufficiently redeemed by my own invariable vote in the House of Lords, and the general support which ministers have received in the Commons from all those over whom I may be supposed to possess any influence. *Entre nous,* I think the people at the



... their favour, and t
careless as to the mo
securing it. I am, t
pleased that they shoul
will remind them that m
amount to fanaticism.

" To say the truth, I
impracticable on one or
my application might a
attended to. For ins
Sowerby, who, with all
clever and deserving mar
are, unfortunately, far fi
he has long been desirou
or even an African consu
which he is eminently qu

to the Foreign Secretary in his favour. I was kept some days without any answer to my letter; and when the answer did arrive, it was couched in the driest and most unsatisfactory terms consistent with the common respect due to my station;—with a good deal of conventional nonsense about the multiplicity of claims, and the limited nature of the patronage, in consequence of reductions, &c.;—and what, I confess, irritated me more than the refusal itself,—the body of the letter, although signed by Lord P——, was evidently in the handwriting of a clerk or secretary!!!

"At the Admiralty, also, I have been equally unsuccessful in my efforts to obtain promotion for Mr. Calverley Fitz-Hugh, a most meritorious young officer, who has been constantly afloat for the last ten years,—who was wounded at Navarino, and in whose fate I take a *very lively interest*, for a reason which I need not explain, but which, I dare say, you will *easily guess*. You see, my dear Harry, I am dis-

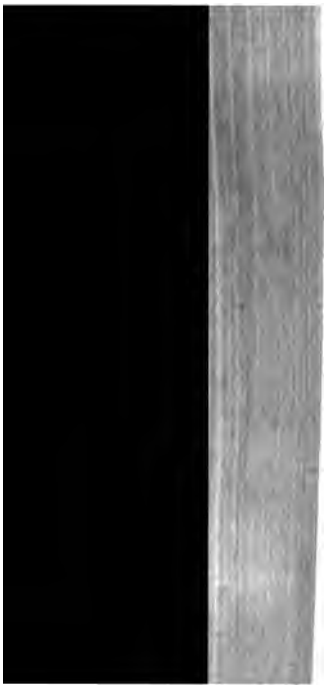


world, and no parso
strictly *sub rosâ*.

" In addition to all
strong reason for wisl
seat. In stating it, I r
an unguarded admissi
cided advantage over n
to trust you, after w
You know that I attacl
ance to the representat
continued in our family
were you to retire from
sent, I confess I should b
ply your place by a cand
I should consider the r
Your brother Spencer i

there is the chance of another contest;—as in the event of a vacancy, the Tyringhams are very likely to come forward again; and though the result would, I have little doubt, be in our favour, the affair would entail much expense, and more *worry*. On every account, therefore, it is advisable that you should retain your seat.

"The scarcity of *Calverleys*, however, which may be almost said to threaten the extinction of the male line, in our house, leads me to a very natural reflection. Why don't you marry? You are seven or eight and twenty, good-looking in person, and agreeable in manners,—*sans vous flatter;* and occupying a position in society which entitles you to a distinguished alliance, both as to rank and fortune. With respect to the latter, you will, of course, please yourself; as I am still ready to do for you what I proposed some months since, and much more, if necessary. But you will, I trust, agree with me, that *birth* is a *sine quâ non*. Turn this



Her health is still i
whether she is yet
counter the journey
ever, at all events, g
next week, as the –
mittee.

" With respect to
your opposition, I ne
the propriety of cond
a manner as possible
as often as you please
but, believe me, the l
ject the better. If,
template a return to
affair has blown o

"So far, so good," said Harry, as he folded up the letter. "My uncle is a fine fellow, after all;—and I may yet be Leader of the House of Commons. But I wish he had been silent on the chapter of matrimony. I do not half like his hint, which has anything but a *casual* appearance. 'You will, I trust, agree with me that *birth* is a *sine quâ non*.' Indeed I shall do no such thing! With all submission to his lordship, I may fairly consider myself as having nobility enough for two. Besides, at all events, Caroline is one of 'Nature's Aristocracy;'—and as everybody, including herself, I believe, is in the dark respecting her real origin, it is but fair to give her the benefit of the doubt. Would to Heaven that her want of fortune were an objection as easily disposed of!—Well, we must have patience. As yet, I have certainly been rather fortunate in my public career;—and with such a stimulus to exertion as the prospect of obtaining *her* hand, what may not be achieved!"

After having written a suitable re
Calverley's dispatch, in grateful
acknowledgment of his kindness, I
anxiety was to communicate to L
dere the comparatively favourable
affair, from which he had anticipat
annoyance and mortification. As
cited her curiosity and perhaps he
the night of the ball, by his vague
of disappointment and desponden
himself doubly bound to relieve he
subject in which he could not fo
doubt that she took a lively interes

He therefore repaired to Hill S
earliest admissible hour, according
which regulates morning visiting.
countess was at home, but not alon
in her drawing-room, lolling perf
ease in a Napoleon-chair, his feet st
on the fender, with a most pro
unaccountable air of domestication,
Vesey.

Most heartily—and not by any means for the first time in his life, our hero wished him—no matter where! but the gallant colonel maintained his ground, and although Lady Belvedere blushed slightly, as she extended her hand to Calverley, *his* reception of our hero was as unembarrassed as it was cordial.

"We were just discussing you," said the colonel, "when you were announced."

"Indeed!" said Calverley, "'*Parlez du diable*,' &c.—I trust that those whose character precedes their arrival, fare rather better than those who, like Sir Peter Teazle, 'leave it behind them.'"

"You had no great cause to complain, as far as the colonel is concerned, I can assure you," said Caroline, *avec intention*.

"And you are too well accustomed to the extreme severity of Lady Belvedere's comments on her friends in general, and yourself in particular," said the colonel, archly, "to



(*fâcheux* as he undou
coming blush which th
on the cheek of our he

" Can you give me
said she, as if anxious

" With much pleasu
is the first occasion
honoured me, by clain
parliamentary privilege
it will not be the last,

As Lady Belvedere
more than half a dozen
it was no great wonde
laid him under contrib
franks. Calverley was
this, but he made the

valuable prerogative of the senatorial character.

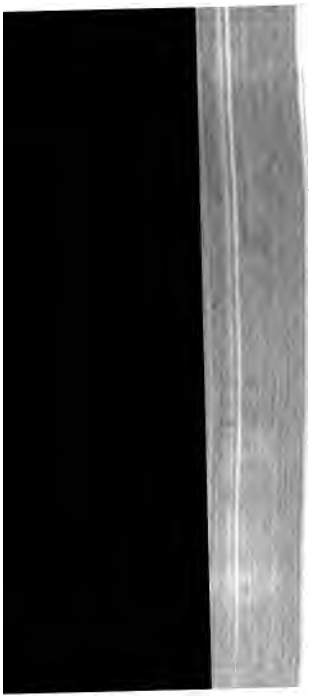
"Well," said Vesey, as Harry sat down to write the frank; "I was debating with myself whether I could venture to offer you my congratulations, on an appointment which has been very currently reported. But I see that I should, at least, have been premature."

"I can assure you," said Harry, "that I have no present prospect of office;—very far from it. I do not mean even to accept the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds," continued he, laughing; "although I believe that important and responsible office is strictly within my reach."

"I am very happy to hear you say so," observed Lady Belvedere.

"That is a doubtful compliment," said the colonel.

"Not at all—as I mean it," said Caroline. "And Captain Calverley well knows that it is



struction most favourable
every equivocal remark
who knows Lady Belved
attach any other than th
cation to what falls from

" Well, well, I don't
chief," said the colonel
may say as many civil th
you think proper."

The conversation no
ferent turn; and the col
on outstaying Harry, di
the day with a degree o
our hero had never give
generally seen him un
painful and peculiar feel

fatal remembrance" served to tinge with melancholy the habitual state of his mind, was certainly true. But there were moments when the natural joyousness of an Irishman's spirit would get the better of a depression which, had the circumstances in which it originated been so far cleared up, as to leave no ground for persevering conjecture, would long since have yielded to the soothing influence of time.

As it was, the general tone of his spirits had become rather more cheerful, since he had established, satisfactorily to himself, the fact of his relationship to Lady Belvedere; and in the society of one whose beauty combined with the fascination of her manner, to remind him so forcibly of his beloved and lost Geraldine, he found the most effectual consolation, of which the nature of his affliction admitted.

After remaining for an hour, in the faint hope that the free and easy colonel might at



committee.

"Are you walking
verley?" enquired V

"I am going dow
Harry.

"Then, if you wi
with you as far as th
Vesey, taking up his h

"What a sweet cr
is!" exclaimed the cc
were in the street.

"That is a point or
to disagree with you,
"You appear to be ver
tinued he.

"Why, I think I

I have been acquainted with her for several
s," said he, "and may almost flatter my-
that she looks upon me as an old friend.
ommon with most of her friends, however,
i still in the dark, with respect to a subject
hich perhaps you can enlighten me. Have
any idea who she really was?"

his question was intended to startle the
nel, and it had the desired effect. Harry
hed him closely, as he made the enquiry,
discovered, in the slight tremor of his lip,
the momentary contraction of his brow,
ng corroborative evidence in support of his
icion, that there was some mysterious con-
ion between Lady Belvedere and Vesey;—
, at any rate, he was in possession of the
et of her birth.

How should I know?" said the colonel.
is not very long ago, since I put the very
e question to you; and, if you recollect,
iout obtaining any very satisfactory an-
r."

sidered a very odd, rather foolish, and not particularly relevant enquiry.

"My forbearance," said he at length, "had nothing to do with my individual opinion on these matters; but with reference to the prejudices of the world in general, I did not consider myself called upon to be more explicit. Indeed, I should have been hardly justified in mentioning reports far too vague to carry with them any degree of authority. By many people, Lady Belvedere has been supposed to be the natural daughter of Mr. Wilmot, in whose family she was educated;—by others—"

"And do you believe that report?" interrupted the colonel hastily.

"Really," said Harry, "I have no *data* to proceed upon;—no grounds either for belief or disbelief. It is a mystery which I should very much like to fathom."

"Do you mean to say then," said Vesey,



feelings towards Lady Be

"*My feelings* towards exclaimed Harry in incr and somewhat piqued at question. "You will Vesey, but in my total i cumstances which induce an interest in the conce cannot recognise your rig a subject."

"Captain Calverley," lemnly, "it is necessary th stand each other. We enquiry out of the questi That I *do* take the deepes regards Lady Belvedere, i

I expect candour from you, on the present occasion, it is but fair that I should relieve your mind on one point. However concerned I may be for Lady Belvedere's happiness, I am not, and never can be, a suitor for her hand. After this assurance, although you may be surprised, you will perhaps be less offended when I enquire again into the nature and character of the sentiments which you entertain towards her."

"As you still think proper to conceal the authority on which you propose the question," said Harry, "it is obvious that I should be fully justified in declining to answer so singular an interrogatory. But although, while calling upon me for candour, your own disclosures are so incomplete,—I cannot bring myself to believe that you are actuated by idle or impertinent curiosity. I will therefore take it for granted, that you have sufficient motives for your enquiry; and assuming that those motives are not unfriendly to me, I will at once ac-

knowledge, what I certainly need
ashamed to avow,—that my feelings
Lady Belvedere are those of the mo
enthusiastic, and devoted attachment.
loved her long,—but hopelessly; and
circumstances have in some degree
Heaven only knows whether I shall
able to surmount the obstacles whic
sent separate us. One thing is cert
ever, that if I may not make her
of my hand,—that hand, at least, sh
be given to another."

"What!" exclaimed Vesey; "an
uncertainty respecting her origin an
which, in your eyes, may become ins
able! Is it possible that professing, a
this devoted love for her,—you can
courage to make her your wife,—be
doing so, you might form what the w
a *mésalliance?*—Are you a young
lover, and a soldier,—and can you
your own happiness,—perhaps tha

should be still dearer to you than your own, on the altar of a cold and illiberal prejudice? I am no enemy to family pride. It is not only a natural but a laudable feeling;—but its noblest function is to guard the moral dignity of a house,—not the heraldic purity of its escutcheon.—I am aware that you are of ancient descent and high connexions;—that you are next heir to a peerage and a princely fortune: but if, in servile compliance with an absurd punctilio, you can hesitate to share these advantages with one whom you profess to love,—one whose matchless beauty is her least recommendation in the eyes of all who value purity of mind, sweetness of temper, and refinement of character in a woman;—if, I say, after your marked and constant attentions, you can talk of giving her up, because, forsooth! her birth is enveloped in obscurity, and *may* be branded with the stigma of illegitimacy, then, Captain Calverley, I say that you are wholly unworthy of her notice;—that

your attachment to her is a mere pre
and that such heartless, unfeeling con
more derogatory to your nobility, th
alliance with the very lowest of that s
which *she* is such an ornament!"

"Colonel Vesey," said Harry, "your
mence is as misplaced as it is unaccount
You are combating a chimera which you
yourself conjured up, and denouncing fe
and sentiments which have no existenc
in your own disordered imagination.—
have I said, sir, which can justify y
ascribing to me the conduct which y
unnecessarily condemn? Had you that
ledge of my circumstances and views, w
which you could have no imaginable rig
address me in so unusual a tone of enqu
you would be aware that the obstacl
which I spoke, have not the remotest
ence to the prejudices of birth, which n
holds in greater contempt than I do.—
would know that my sole cause of hesi

is the restricted extent of my pecuniary means, and the gloomy nature of my prospects;—that it is *her* sacrifice which I forbear to urge,—*her* position in society which I dare not require her to forfeit, for the sake of one who has not even a bare competence to offer her in exchange for the wealth and advantages which she would be called upon to resign.—You talk of my future rank and possessions;—but you must know how precarious is my chance of succession,—how contingent on the life, as well as the death of others.—Heaven is my witness, however, that were I possessed of all the rank, wealth, and dignities which this world can bestow, I should value them chiefly, for the proof which they would enable me to afford of my disinterested attachment to Lady Belvedere; and without bestowing one thought on the probabilities, or possibilities relating to her birth,—I should proudly and joyfully claim her as my bride,—as I hope yet to do, under circumstances which,

if less brilliant, may be still suff
vourable to ensure *her* happiness
my own."

"That was spoken like an hone
a true soldier," said Vesey. "Ca
believe you most implicitly. Forgiv
a moment I misapprehended your me
be not offended at what seems, I ac
an unjustifiable interference in you
Rely upon it—I speak advisedly,—yo
of matrimonial happiness are not
by the conversation we have had
Suspend your curiosity for the prese
ing the interest I take in this ma
cause will one day be explained to y
no doubt. In the meantime, believ
no slight evidence of my respect for
racter, and my reliance on your discr
I have said so much.—I know I c
upon you, to refrain from mentioni
body what has passed between us.
your hand, and allow me, henceforw

myself your friend. I am not without hopes that I may one day prove my claim to that character."

So saying, he held out his hand, as they were about to separate; and Harry, quite pacified, but still rather bewildered by what had fallen from his mysterious acquaintance, returned the pressure with every appearance of cordiality.

"It is all right;" soliloquized Vesey, as Calverley moved away. "He is a fine frank-hearted fellow, and worthy of her. It must be—I have the means;—why should I not have the will?—He who may not be happy himself, must find his best consolation in contributing to the happiness of others!"

CHAPTER VII.

We must now leave our friend Har
short time, and report progress re
Vesey's efforts to trace the mysteriou
of his sister's ruin, and his own co
unhappiness. In that parting inter
tween Lady Belvedere and him at th
—which had so naturally excited the
of our hero, it will be recollected t
placed a miniature in his hands,—ther
materially confirming the unpleasant
which poor Harry had begun to form
ing the nature of their acquaintance

miniature, however, was, as the reader will probably conclude, no other than the portrait of Clarges, which Lady Belvedere could not, under all the circumstances, refuse to entrust to his keeping, as it might possibly guide him to the discovery of what he was so painfully anxious to ascertain—the real name and condition of the person whom it represented. This was perhaps a faint hope;—but it seemed his only chance, and he clung to it with the more pertinacity from that conviction. The name of the artist was not to be found on any part of the miniature;—upwards of five-and-twenty years must have elapsed since it had been painted; the artist might have died in the interval,—and thus all clue to the object of Vesey's researches, in that direction, might be lost.

But, on the other hand, he might be still living,—and from the practical knowledge of different styles and manners, generally acquired by the profession, he had little doubt



of a work, the pictoria
claimed it as the produ
hand. Vesey had himse
of the art to be perfec
the assurance of any
that it was not from the
executed *his* likeness of
dine. He was almost ce
that work in the possessi
was by the same hand as
but this conviction availe
we have said, the distinc
tion, well known for ma
miniature painter in Dub
of a twelvemonth previou

still alive—the mystery would soon be cleared up, and revenge might at last be within his reach.

With these hopes and feelings, he returned to London, and lost no time in calling on all the most eminent artists, to whom he successively submitted the mysterious portrait for the benefit of their opinion respecting its authorship. But no satisfactory information was elicited by these persevering enquiries. In almost every case the result was the same. All agreed that the miniature exhibited considerable talent as a work of art; but none could form any guess as to the name of the painter; although most of them inclined to the opinion that it was the production of a foreign artist, probably a Frenchman. Here again was disappointment. The project of making the tour of Europe, in the hope of discovering the unknown artist, was, even to Vesey's ardent spirit, too Quixotic to be seriously contemplated. If Clarges were still living, chance

home than it could be a
resolved that he would f
in England, and mix a
society, where it was po
or other, when he least
once more behold those d
no lapse of time could eff
and he felt confident tha
and-twenty years could n
much as to prevent their
by one to whom they supp
of remembrance. The f
deed, as faithfully represe
though strikingly handso
marked to be easily forgo
that peculiarity of expres
which was not likely to

strong and broadly on the human countenance, as wholly to obliterate the distinctive characteristics that in youth appear almost ineffaceable.

In accordance with this resolution, he had passed the winter partly in London, and partly at Brighton, to which latter place the society of Lady Belvedere had been his chief attraction; and though he never absolutely lost sight of the object which he looked upon as constituting the chief aim of his existence,—although he never neglected an opportunity of submitting the miniature to a professional eye, wherever he could do so without exciting surprise or comment, and there seemed even a remote possibility of any light being thrown on the subject,—he was gradually subsiding into a more tranquil state of mind with respect to it; and each succeeding day, as it seemed to lessen the chances of success in his pursuit, found him more resigned to the prospect of

ultimate failure, and less solicitou
gate a mystery which he began t
ever being enabled to fathom.

But in proportion as the hop
discoveries grew fainter and
regard for Lady Belvedere, b
pected meeting with whom
had been revived, was daily an
creasing, till at length all hi
might be said to centre in this
lovely record of his dear and unh
dine. On her part, Caroline fe
acknowledge that claim of consa
which there was, if not legal evide
a moral certainty too decided to
ment called in question. She t
vited him constantly to her hou
tended to him all those privileges
of which she could prudently all
exercise, consistently with the stri
on the subject of their family c

secret hitherto confided only to the discreet friendship of Mrs. Norcliffe.

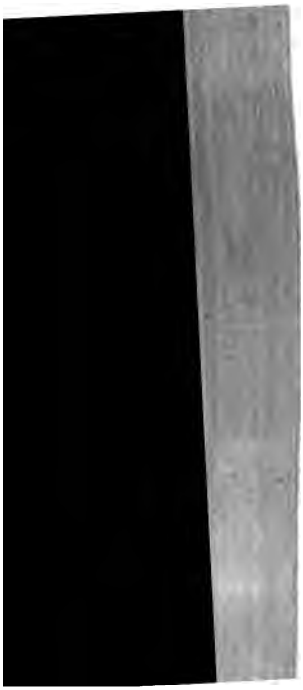
That good lady's acquaintance with the affair, proved a very convenient circumstance for both parties; as, fully appreciating the awkwardness of Caroline's position with respect to this half-acknowledged uncle, and aware of the unpleasant construction that might be put by a gossiping world on the frequency of his visits to the lovely widow, she determined to lend the sanction of her presence to his harmless assiduities; and after having passed the greater part of the winter with Lady Belvedere at Brighton, she was now positively installed as honorary duenna *en titre*, in Hill Street, where she exercised her functions of *surveillance* to the great terror of sundry flirting and anti-matrimonial bachelors,—but greatly to the comfort of her self-constituted charge. Indeed it must be confessed, that although she was never back-



more deliberate assuranc
to defy her,—no more
modating dragon ever m
enchanted princess.—He
and *écarté*, too, did L
service; as Vesey's orien
generally induced him t
his attention to her, d
when they were *en évi*
people he was supposed t
as *l'ami de la maison*,
the chaperon, rather tha
of the hostess.

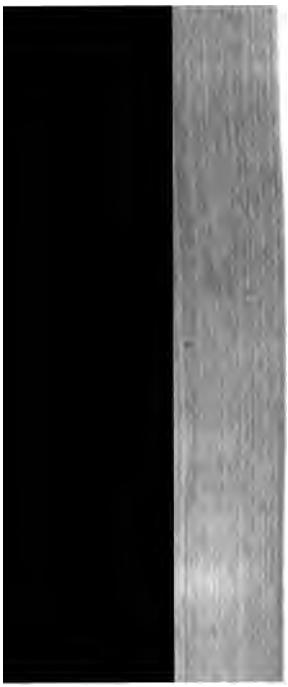
Being, however, receiv
footing in the establishm
in hearing from some of

been confirmed in his mind, by the constraint of manner, not to say positive embarrassment, which Lady Belvedere exhibited, whenever he was the subject of remark in their private circle. He had consequently watched the public career and private deportment of our hero, with a degree of interest very natural in one who felt so deep a concern for the happiness of his niece. The result of his enquiries and personal observation was, in all cases, favourable to Harry, and perfectly in accordance with the agreeable impression which his appearance and manners had originally made on Vesey, when they had met at Sir Sampson Jellico's. The colonel was, however, but very imperfectly acquainted with his financial circumstances, and in common with the majority of the London world, looked upon him as a very rising young man, whose present position was highly satisfactory, and whose future prospects were eminently brilliant. He was perfectly well aware of the



pecuniary means, at le
assistance, were suffic
able present competer
he might marry,—an
both able and willing
should Caroline's hap
his doing so,—he was
tain the reason why
come forward and d
It was this anxiety
led to the conversatic
the preceding chapte
ries concerning Lady
were, in point of fac
discovering the relatic
self stood to her, ha

his unauthorized interference and subsequent explanation however, still farther strengthened Vesey's prepossession in his favour; and he began to reflect seriously on the mode which he should adopt to carry into effect his benevolent intentions with respect to Caroline and our hero, without offending the sensitive and proud independence of the one, or publicly proclaiming his mortifying relationship to the other. His own pecuniary means were ample, as fortune had smiled on his Eastern labours with a degree of benignity which she rarely exhibits in the present day,—at least to her military votaries,—even in those regions so proverbially fertile in golden harvests. But although he had not long passed the meridian of life, his habits and feelings were those of confirmed celibacy,—or according to the more expressive phrase, *old-bachelorism*; and as he had given up all notion of matrimony, it seemed to him a matter of course that his



be supernuous, when cons
reference to his personal w

What might have beer
deliberations, we are not
say; nor is it at present n
for within a few days of h
Harry, a circumstance occ
diately turned the current
strongly as ever in the dir
had been so lately diverted

When dining with his
mire, he happened to find
to a very intelligent and
Frenchman, but recently
and full of all the latest
ing Parisian gossip,—politi

Carlist; but he had not long enjoyed the benefit of his conversation before he was undeceived on that point. The *tranchant* tone of his opinions, the self-sufficiency with which he discussed all subjects, and the revolutionary *hardiesse,*—(which he mistook for novelty,)—of his views in every department of thought,—whether appertaining to metaphysics, politics, manners, or morals, would have proclaimed him as a "*jeune France*" of the first water, if he had not been sadly deficient in that solemn gravity of aspect, and republican austerity of demeanour, so awfully characteristic of the "*Jeunesse pensante, agissante et réfléchissante du dix-neuvième siècle.*"

In spite, however, of their disagreement upon almost every topic, Vesey and his French acquaintance contrived to converse very amicably, and very much to their mutual satisfaction. It soon appeared that Monsieur Desbrochures was a *littérateur* of no inconsiderable pretensions;—and the often-



very naturally brought on
bated with great anima
From literature, the tra
the fine arts; and here,
minded Frenchman was
in his own peculiar provi
architecture came in for
notice; but painting was
bataille.—History, portra
liar life, *tableaux de ge*
amiss to him;—the rela
branch of the art were
mon accuracy and discri
merits of every master,
whose name happened to
pronounced upon with eq

scarcely left a single laurel-leaf to adorn the brow of Michael Angelo, Raffaelle, and Co. With all the distinguished reputations of our own day, he was, of course, particularly familiar. He had lived in habits of intimacy with David, seldom missed a *soirée* at Gérard's, and had been more than once consulted in the article of horseflesh by Horace Vernet.

Although Vesey was far from estimating the knowledge and acquirements of his talkative friend, at that gentleman's own valuation, it occurred to him that one so perfectly conversant, by his own account, with the different styles of the modern French artists, might possibly make a lucky guess with respect to Clarges's portrait. He therefore watched his opportunity, and when the company were about to adjourn to the drawing-room, he begged that he might be allowed to detain him for a few minutes after the others had left the room, while he submitted

to his judgment a work of art, of w
yet he had been unable to discover
thor.

"I have some reason to believe,"
"that it is the production of a cou
of yours; and if that should really
case, I have little doubt that your p
eye will at once assign it to its real
should the artist be possessed of any
or reputation."

"*Voyons!*" said the confident conn
as Vesey produced the miniature in qu
"*Pour peu qu'il soit connu, je ne cro
en effet, qu'il m'échappe. Cà n'est v
pas si mal;*" continued he, patronizin
he examined the portrait with the ai
master: "*Savez vous que cette tête es
bien modelée. Il y a d'ailleurs beauc
finesse dans la touche, et un certain sen
du vrai dans le coloris des chairs, q
revient extrêmement!*"

"Well, but," said Vesey, anxious to

to the point, and caring very little for a dissertation on its merits as a work of art. "Have you any idea who painted it?"

"*Attendez,*" said the *virtuoso*, with a most penetrating aspect, "*C'est précisément de quoi je m'occupe.* But, first of all, it certainly is *not* Isabey."

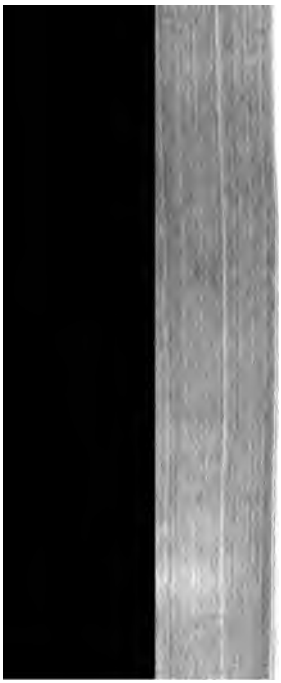
"I am quite aware of that," said Vesey, who could scarcely restrain his impatience. "But do you believe it to be the work of a French artist?"

"*Sans aucun doute,*" answered Desbrochures. "*J'en répondrais sur ma tête.*"

"And cannot you give a guess respecting his name?" continued Vesey.

"*Encore un petit moment, s'il vous plait,*" said the critic, "and I shall be able to satisfy you on that point, I hope."

So saying, he put on a pair of gold spectacles, and producing an *étui* from his pocket, he drew out of it a small magnifying-glass, which he passed slowly and carefully over the



" *J'y suis!*" exclaimed
triumphant air. " It is
his private mark."

" Hérault?" said Vese
the name. Is he a living

" Undoubtedly," said
was so at least, three we
Paris;—I visited his *ate*
my departure."

" And you are quite c
ture is his painting?"

" *Tenez, regardez,*" sa
he held the magnifier to
you not see, in that corn
the right, a small Roma
naked eye, looks like a sl

affected to see, which answered his purpose quite as well.

"This picture has not been recently painted, I presume?" said Desbrochures.

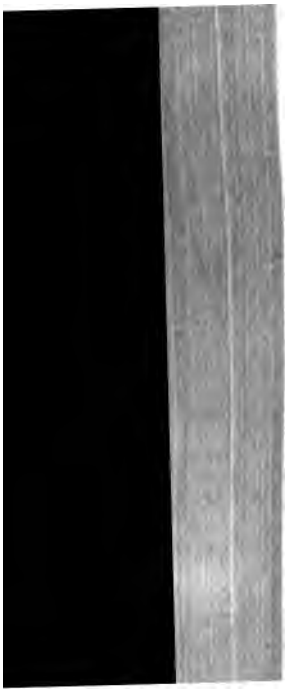
"No," replied Vesey; "you may see by the style of dress, that it is an affair of twenty years ago."

"Exactly—and Hérault's style has certainly altered very much since; *comme de raison.* Otherwise I could not have hesitated a moment on the subject."

"Can you favour me with his address in Paris?" said the colonel.

"*Très volontiers.* It is—let me see—Rue de la Paix, *No.—ma foi!* I forget the number; *mais c'est égal! tout le monde vous le dira.* He is as well known as the *Pont Neuf.*

Vesey expressed his warm acknowledgments for the valuable information he had received, and they rejoined the party upstairs. But as soon as he could make his escape, he hurried home in no very tranquil



aspect bore testimony to
ing, as well as the bodi
he had undergone. He
that evening's mail, and,
must leave him to pursu

CHAPTER VIII.

"HARRY," said Lord Calverley, as they were sitting tête-à-tête after dinner, a day or two after his lordship's arrival in London—"who is this Lady Belvedere, concerning whose beauty and fascinations I hear so much?"

"Surely," said Harry, "you must recollect your own near neighbour in the country."

"Oh! I know very well that she is the late lord's widow,—that the abbey has been left to her for her life,—and so forth; but what I want to know is, who she was originally,—what are her family and connexions."



"And have you nev
enquire farther?" said h
"At least," answered
rassed, and more annc
obtained any very posit
subject."
"Ah! it is just as I
Calverley: "Her fine n
or rather proves too muc
entitled to it, there woul
ascertaining how she cam
I don't believe that the
remaining in England.
tively, to be a law again
the names of our aristoc

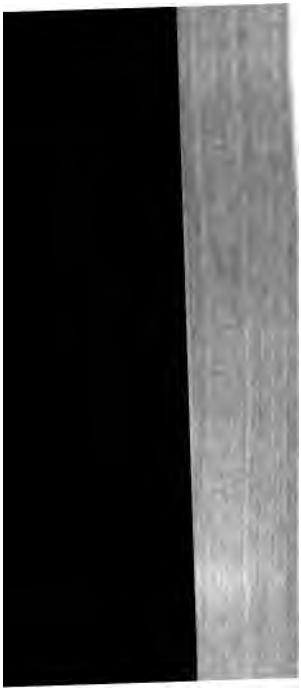
Count or Baron to their names when they visit England."

Harry felt excessively indignant at these observations as applied to the lady of his love—but what could he say? He could not disprove the correctness of their application; so he made a violent effort to suppress his rising choler, and remained silent.

"Is she really as handsome as people say?" continued his lordship,—who seemed to have rather an unaccountable predilection for the subject.

"Is it possible that you have never seen her?" said Harry.

"Never, to my knowledge;—she has been very little in ——shire I think;—and in London, your aunt and I are not, as you know, much in the habit of going to large parties, or frequenting the sort of society where we should be most likely to meet her. But what account do you give of her beauty?"



…though conscious that
the eyes as he spoke.

"You are a good d
Lord Calverley, looking

"Why—no—not a g
sionally :" answered Ha

"And is she as capti
as people say ?" contin

"Her manners are
fected," said Harry, w
moderation in the article

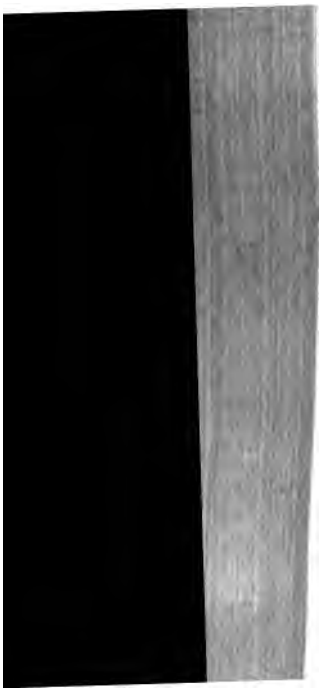
"I wonder she don't
his lordship.

Harry was silent, for h
self to speak.

"But I suppose," resu

station and family is looking out for a wife,—that is not, or should not be quite sufficient. I don't know whether it is so now;—but in my day, the saloons of the theatres were wonderfully supplied with historical and romantic names;—Mortimers, Nevilles, Howards, and Percies, in great abundance. God forbid that I should say anything against your fair friend, of whom I know nothing; but to many people her fine name might be suspicious; and as nobody seems to know where Lord Belvedere picked her up"—

"Picked her up!" exclaimed Harry, with startling energy, and in no gentle tone,—disregarding all considerations of prudence, in his natural anxiety to vindicate the character—so wantonly and uncharitably called in question—of her whom he loved,—"Picked her up!—Good God, sir, is it possible that you can be under such a misapprehension with respect to one of the most virtuous and irreproachable, as well as one of the loveliest and



name; and I will vent
out the whole range
not a woman who oc
ground of unassailable
Lady Belvedere—not
the most scrupulous
as well as the most
conduct. As for the
over her birth, it is
fault; but there is *no*
to her own history
Belvedere married he
friend and guardian
whose eye she had be
infancy,—and whose
been for a moment d

This was spoken with a degree of warmth and excitement that to the most unsuspicious observer would at once have proclaimed the true state of the case. Lord Calverley coldly observed:—

"Well, Harry, I could not know all that intuitively, but I do not understand why you should be so much excited on the subject of this fair lady. You seem to take a very extraordinary interest in her concerns."

Harry looked at his uncle;—the truth at once flashed upon his mind, and he perceived that he had fallen into a trap that had been deliberately laid for him. The quiet sarcastic expression of Lord Calverley's countenance, convinced him that his lordship had been intentionally playing upon his feelings, with a view of obtaining confirmation of that which he had either heard or suspected. Harry felt naturally rather indignant at this artifice; and disdaining to resort to equivocation in any farther attempt to conceal what his impetu-



"It is perfectly
take the liveliest inte
Belvedere;—a degr
I have never felt
pains me to be unde
sentiments which I
but I should be unw
were I to allow you t
towards her are of a
character. In spite
against her, on the gr
and want of fortune,
affections are devotedl
her; and I can only sa
demn me for what no
infatuation, you shou

Harry, I gave you credit for more sense. This rhapsodical style is very pardonable in schoolboys, and this magnanimous disregard of worldly advantages and proprieties is precisely what every beardless ensign in the line may be expected to feel, after a county ball-room flirtation, wound up by a few tumblers of champagne. But really, a grown man, approaching the reasonable age of thirty,—a politician and a senator, ought to know better."

"There, I cannot agree with you, sir;" answered Harry. "Folly, extravagance, or vice, may indeed require the palliation of extreme youth, to ensure forgiveness; but I am yet to learn that there is any thing in an honourable attachment to a virtuous and amiable woman, of which a man arrived at years of discretion, need be ashamed."

"I can scarcely call that attachment *honourable*," rejoined Lord Calverley, "which sets at defiance the proprieties of life, and the duties of our station. The same line of argu-

of course is *amiable*, as
the influence of her c
by possibility, be virtuo
"Good God!" exclai
culty repressing his ire
parison; "can you fo
imagine any analogy b
connexions of which you
where education, refinen
ners, talents and accompl
order,—every thing, in sh
balance the single obj
objection which, howeve
have appeared to the irr
our ancestors in days, th
the progress of reason an

want no common-places about the march of intellect; of which, God knows, we hear enough, and too much, to our cost. Recollect we are alone,—arguing the case on its own merits; and all the conventional slang which it suits our purpose to employ in the public discussion of political matters, is very much out of place here, where there is nobody to be taken in by it. Does it follow that because we find it expedient, on the hustings, or in the house, to humour the folly and arrogance of the people, by high sounding phrases and unmeaning professions of a republican tendency, —does it follow, I say, that we should be influenced by these Utopian buffooneries in our conduct as individuals, or act up to their spirit in private life? Because a gentleman may be called on to yield a theoretic assent to certain abstract principles of equality, and so forth, must he of necessity degrade himself by a *mésalliance?*"

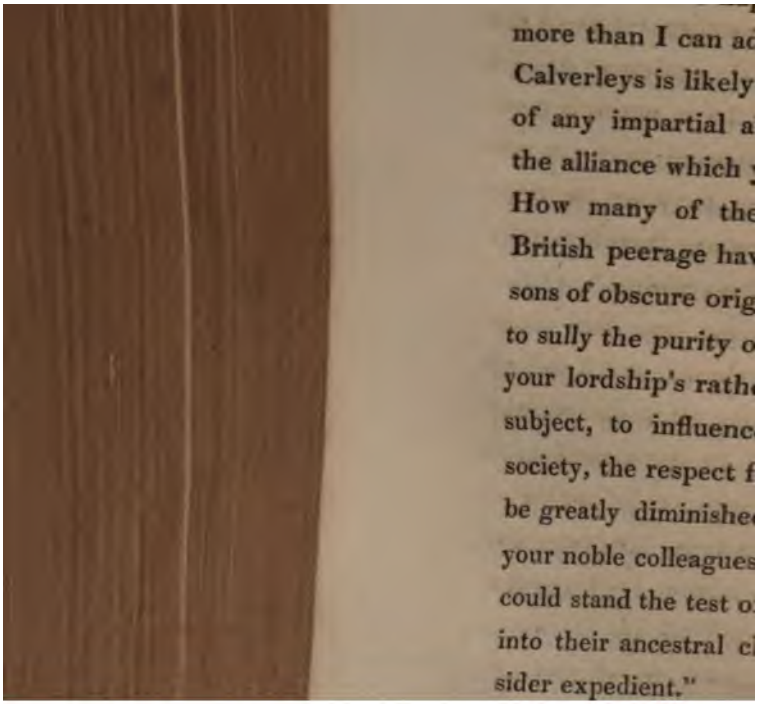
"I cannot admit," rejoined Harry, "that

my part. Who, or
consider it a condes
in her distinguished
one whose personal
the theme of univ
society is courted
noblest in the land!—
in positive *rank*, as s
the world. Your l
my importance as mu
pretensions of Lady E

"I am not thinking
Captain Calverley," sai
"My concern in this
what you may, and in
day be. It is true, yo

it would not perhaps be worth his while to interfere. But when you reflect, sir, that in the natural course of events, you will probably be, at no very distant period, the representative of one of the most ancient houses in England—a family, sir, whose pretensions, as part of the British aristocracy, are far superior to those of my Lord Belvedere himself, and all who ever bore the name of Tyringham,—when you reflect on all this, I do say, that it is your *duty* to consult the dignity, or if you think proper so to phrase it, the *prejudices* of your family, by selecting for your wife,—the sharer of your ancestral honours, a person whose alliance, if it does not add to the splendour of that family, will at least entail no discredit on the future inheritors of your ancient name."

"Rely upon it, my lord," said Harry, "no woman whom I select for my wife, shall ever *entail discredit* on my family. I regret extremely that our views should differ so widely in a matter of this importance; but I cannot,



more than I can ac
Calverleys is likely
of any impartial a
the alliance which
How many of the
British peerage hav
sons of obscure orig
to sully the purity o
your lordship's rath
subject, to influenc
society, the respect f
be greatly diminishe
your noble colleague
could stand the test o
into their ancestral c
sider expedient."

appears, flatter myself with the prospect of exercising any moral influence over you. Be it so! It is, I suppose, another 'sign of the times,' and, an additional evidence of the 'march of mind.' But I have nothing more to say. You may rest assured that you will never obtain my sanction to your marriage with Lady Belvedere; you are therefore quite right to act in defiance of my wishes."

"It will always grieve me, my dear uncle, to act in opposition to them; and I still indulge a hope that you may alter your opinion concerning this affair. In the meantime, as there is no immediate prospect of my being able to carry my matrimonial intentions into effect, I trust that my candour in the avowal of my real sentiments, will not be the means of producing any unpleasant feeling between us. Believe me, I shall always be most anxious to consult your wishes, and be guided by your advice, whenever I can do so consistently with my duty towards myself and others. But

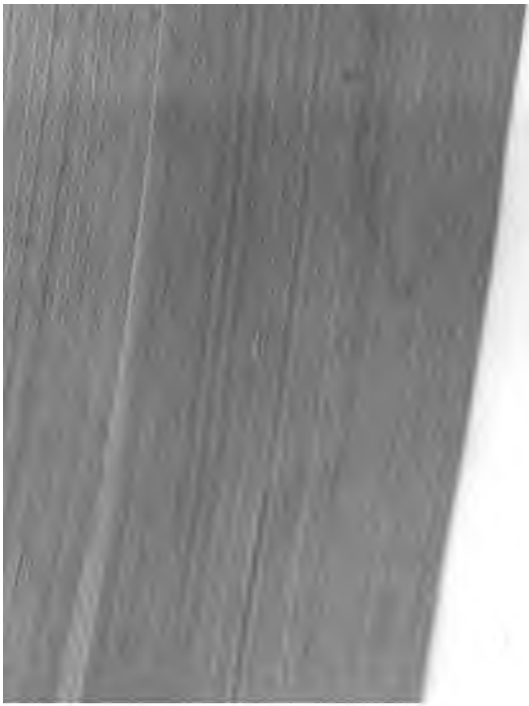
you will bear in mind, that the
which I plead guilty, is not
growth. It existed, and had
clared, long before I had any re
that my future destiny was a m
you took any interest. If my
some degree altered, by what has
occurred, am I to make that alt
text for a change in my conduct
object of my affections,—for base
the genuine sentiments of my he
you would not urge me to this?"

"I have already said, Harry," r
Calverley sullenly, but rather soft
I shall interfere no farther; that n
you."

"Nay," said Harry, "I do not
your interference; nor will I desp
day obtaining your sanction. Belie
must see Lady Belvedere, and tal
before you pronounce her unworth
admitted into your family. If it be

you to overlook the defect of birth under
circumstances, you will at once acknow-
ge that she deserves to form the exception
our general rule."

'My rule is not only *general*," said Lord
verley,—" it is *invariable*, Harry. But
you say you have no immediate intention
marrying her, we will not quarrel about it
. Of course she is an angel, as long as
do not see anybody whom you like better.
t *I* am too old to fall in love at first sight,
any rate. For the present we will say no
re about the matter."



must. So give me my slippers and dressing-gown, and tell him to walk up."

"Good morning, Harry," continued he, as our hero was ushered into the 'Castle of Indolence;' "you are up rather early, and I fear I am in bed rather late;—but really, after all,—there is so little in this world worth getting up for,—especially when you take the misery of shaving into consideration, that it takes some time to reconcile one to so great an exertion, which is daily to be undertaken for so very inadequate an object."

"Fitz," said Harry, as soon as they were alone, "I am *really* going to put your friendship to the test."

"Well, Harry," answered Lumley, "I think I may venture to say, that you will find it *sterling*. But what is the matter now?—Whom are you going to shoot?"

"Nobody," said Harry; "not even myself,—although I should have more excuses than

immediately, on a most

"The devil you mu
running away with you

"Psha! my dear Lu
That foolish boy, my
got into the most confo
contrived to lose fiftee
play, to Bubb Tomky
and Count *Somebody*.
hundred pence to me
does not know where
money. He writes me
pledged himself to pay
if somebody does not c
he must positively give
the embassy, and make

the necessary formalities require time, and I want the fifteen hundred pounds *immediately*. In this emergency....."

"Say no more!" interrupted Lumley. "The money is yours, and as much more as you want. I will write a cheque for it this moment.—But why need you take the trouble of going to Paris, on that account? The sum is easily remitted."

"True!—But for more reasons than one, it is expedient that I should myself be the bearer of it. In the first place, no written *lecture* can have half the effect on the mind of my hopeful brother, that the *vivâ voce blowing up* with which I mean to favour him, will, I hope, produce. In the second place,—the matter must be sifted;—as from the character of Lord St. Kitts, and my total ignorance respecting the third person concerned, I do not feel quite secure that there may not have been foul play in the business. It seems, George Heneage, of the

——th, was of the party, an
greater sufferer than Spen
know he is very *green*, as w
St. Kitts, we all know, ha
these ten years; and they say
has been getting rid of his loo
quantities, since he left Engla
it *was* a conspiracy;—but it
one."

Lumley shook his head.
low," said he, "nothing is s
bring home a charge of that d
were it not in itself highly impr
three gentlemen may have ava
of their superior science, at t
our two unsophisticated friend
them in a legitimate way; but
course, "all honourable men!
they can be proved to have act
which I repeat, is very unlike
thing that your brother can do, i
money, and have done with it.

this sort is sometimes a useful lesson, though it may be rather an expensive one, and the professor to whom one is indebted for it may have some claim to more than one of the attributes of Mercury. So pray be cautious how you act when you are in Paris."

"Many thanks for your good advice!" said Harry, "which I shall follow, if I can. As to the money, you see I take you at your word. My uncle you would naturally suppose to be my mark, on such an occasion.—"

"Indeed I should suppose no such thing;" interrupted Lumley.—"I consider my claim better than that of fifty uncles. I thought we had settled that."

"As you please," said Harry, "I shall certainly not dispute your claim, at least while I am so delicately reminding you of what it entails upon you. But I was going to observe, that I am just now more than usually reluctant to apply to his lordship,—as we have had a little misunderstanding,—not amounting to a



pendence in my inter

"Well," said Lum
—on Farquhar's—yo
letter of credit on L
be, at Paris, and yo
trouble."

"A thousand thanl
acknowledgment, whi
fice for the present."

"Your acknowled
claimed Lumley, tear
in question; "what
you take me for Howar

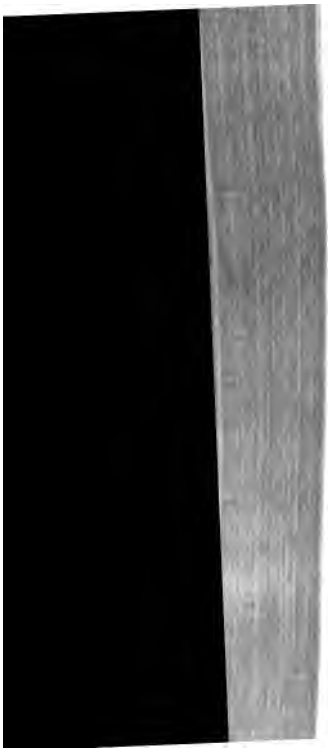
"Not exactly;" said
you might have obser
allowance for interest

you, as long as I live; and I'll get up a conspiracy, for the purpose of extinguishing you, socially, politically, and morally.—You shall be coughed down at St. Stephen's, and black-balled at White's;—the patronesses of Almack's shall pass a vote of perpetual exclusion against you, and you shall be elected by acclamation into the Literary Union!—So now, *gare à vous!*"

"Well;" rejoined Harry, "it seems my bonds are at as great a discount as those of the Spanish Cortes. *N'importe.* I will not quarrel with you about it, as the affair at the Horse Guards will soon be arranged, and I shall escape from the clutches of so unmanageable a creditor."

"And do you really mean to say that you will sell out, in order to discharge this debt?"

"Even so. But you need not attempt to argue the point, my dear Lumley, as my mind is made up.—Not even from my best friend,—and I sincerely believe that no man can have



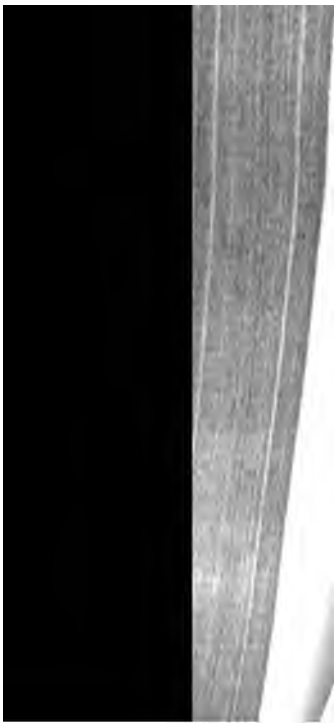
repay it."

"And this you c
to the test, forsooth
would have advanced
terms. I wonder yo
ducting so much for
"Nay," said Har
my acknowledgment,
a debt of honour, w
paid with as little del
"Well, Harry, I n
a tenacity of purpose
which are absolutely
leave town?
"Early to-morrow
leave for three weel
house."

endeavouring to muster energy sufficient for a journey to Paris."

"My dear fellow, I shall be delighted to have you for a travelling companion;—but I give you fair notice that I cannot afford to defer my departure, or loiter on the way. If you can make your arrangements so as to be off to-morrow, and your distaste for locomotion will allow you to travel as fast as post horses can drag us,—come, by all means."

"Be it so! then. There is no difficulty about either of your conditions. I have no arrangements to make, but such as my invaluable factotum Watkins can achieve without putting me to any trouble. I need not apply to head-quarters, for my battalion is at the Tower, and I have two months' leave. I may, perhaps, as well spend three weeks of it in Paris, as any where else; although I had intended to enjoy the *otium cum dig.* without passing the turnpikes.—As to your rate of



I

I see

Dear

why th

My bro

mouse,—

such as S

these circ

ment as you

sion, I thin

terrors of th

grande route b

This matter

ranged, the tw

sooner had Har

Lumley hurried

rapidity,—and pos

mony of breakfas

ed into a room where about fifteen
ilitaires of different grades and
anxiously awaiting their turn of

the goodness to give his lordship
," said Lumley to the attendant
and say that I should be glad of two
conversation with him."
lordship is engaged at present, sir.
name down?" said the man, hesitat-

y name is down *there*, sir," said Lum-
a rather supercilious tone, and pointing
s card. "You will find that *that* is suf-
nt."
he man muttered something not very in-
igible, and disappeared,—while the assem-
ed company of expectants eyed the peremp-
ry stranger with looks more expressive of
urprise than benevolence. But dire indeed
was the indignation, and audible the grumbling
of more than one weather-beaten and elderly



with whom he had b
tendant re-entered t
summoned, in a loud
nant-Colonel Jenks, 3r
—or Captain Simpson
as in the legitimate ord
have done,—but " C
Grenadier Guards."

" Too bad! unjust
partiality," &c. &c. m
to each other, in subd
upon the unconscious s
in the minds of all pre
ing towards the inte
household troops, and

from King Charles the Second, that Lumley was indebted for the unconstitutional preference thus shown to him; but simply to the fact of his being an intimate friend of the secretary, and having enforced his application for an immediate audience, by writing in pencil, on his card—"*one word*, on *urgent* business."

"A thousand apologies for this intrusion, my dear lord," said Lumley, as soon as he had been ushered into "the presence;" "I have left a couple of dozen worthy people outside ready to assassinate me; so I will only detain you one moment. You have had an application from Calverley,—who was formerly in the —th —— about the disposal of his half-pay."

"Very likely," said the secretary. "It is your friend the member for Talkington, is it not?"

"Yes," said Lumley. "Can you tell me whether any steps have been taken in the matter as yet?"

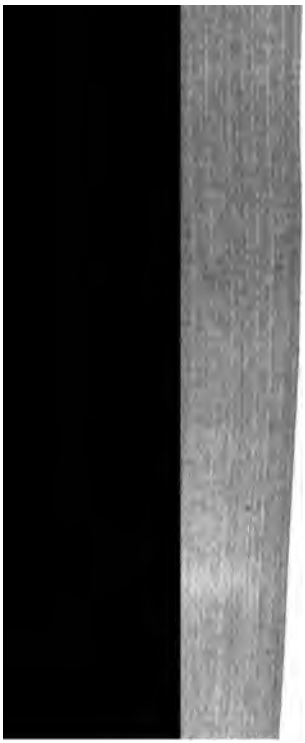


" Only within this d
ject of my visit is to
interpose your authori
for the present at least.
" Am I to underst
" that it is Captain C
draw his application ?"
" I am not quite pr
but if you would be so
he had withdrawn it, y
favour, and render him
vice."
" This is rather irreg
said the secretary, smilin
" Perhaps it is," said I
depend upon it

"Well then, as it is an act of egregious folly on the part of my friend Calverley, to sell his half-pay,—and one which he would not fail to regret as soon as it was irrevocable, I merely wish to point out to your lordship, that there are legitimate grounds for refusal, or at least for the interposition of certain delays, which you official gentlemen know so well how to bring into play, on proper occasions."

"We are generally disposed to consider," said the secretary, "that in affairs of this nature, a man is the best judge of his own interests;—but as the rule may admit of exceptions, and you seem to think that a little delay may afford Captain Calverley an opportunity of amending his views on the subject, I will bear your request in mind."

"Thank you, my dear lord. In official language, that means, I believe, that nothing will be done; and as *nothing* is precisely what I wish you to do in the present instance, it suits my purpose exactly."



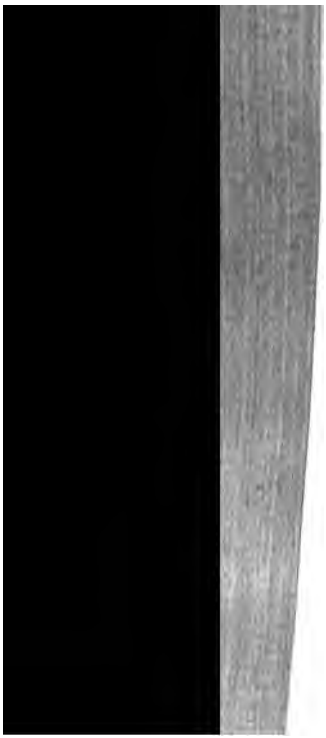
you for presuming to
authority, at the very
favour."

"I shall trust to y
Lumley. "You sure
man to sacrifice his jo

CHAPTER X.

As Colonel Vesey's departure for Paris preceded that of our hero and Lumley, by some days, we are bound to give him also the precedence, in our report of affairs in that gay metropolis, so far as they may be connected with the subject of this veracious history.

His first object on arriving at his hotel, was to ascertain the particular address of Mons. Hérault; and having obtained it without difficulty, he sallied forth the next morning, to seek an interview with the artist, or



disappointment as
quiries, had made
the most promising
chances were still so
and satisfactory disco
feel sanguine as to
doubtedly the circums
strong as to the auth
The lapse of years
all recollection of his
of the artist,—or if
dwelt on the tablets o
book, what security wa
sequent career of a pe
merely have known profe
claimed any share of hi
thing would most proba

revived, even by a partial and scanty discovery. Hope!—of what! can it indeed be *hope* that thus contracts the brow,—that glares from out that wild and feverish eye,—that calls up the hectic spot on that furrowed and sallow cheek? How unlike the bright and joyous feeling that poets invest with such fascinating attributes! Alas! the hope of *revenge* bears in its outward semblance, less of joy than of despair! what may be its *inward* workings we need not enquire:—it is a point that may well be left to the imagination. May you, dear reader, never have more than a theoretical acquaintance with such "pleasures of hope," and may *we* be equally exempt from their practical experience, even though critics may sneer, and reviewers use the tomahawk with the relentless ferocity which so often characterizes the *exécuteurs des hautes œuvres* of literary justice!—

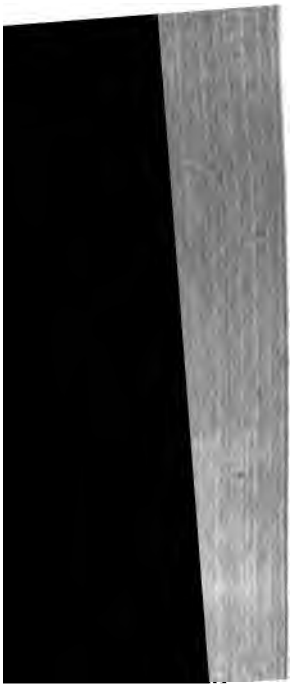
Vesey was once more fated to disappointment, or at least to the postponement of his

few days; the precis
uncertain. So that
colonel, but to disp
best manner he mig
mixing in the gaieties
away the time,—dwell
on the exciting subjec
object of his visit to P
and which were su
claims, whenever soli
mercy of his own mind

There was indeed, n
tention of even the mos
state of regenerated F
tionized Paris;—but V
there had been conside

Notwithstanding the *favourable* state of the weather, which was showery *above*—and muddy *below*,—he was not gratified by the sublime spectacle of the queen and princesses traversing the street in pattens, with crimson cotton umbrellas under their arms,—neither was it established to his satisfaction, as a well authenticated fact, that any lover of democratic simplicity, might "drop in" about dinner-time at the Tuileries, and take "*pot luck*" with the most christian king. As neither of these "concessions to popular opinion" however, found a place in his utopia of government, we cannot say that the dignity of the throne of the barricades, suffered much in his estimation, in consequence.

As the colonel's visit to Paris was one of business, he had given himself no trouble to procure introductions, being little disposed to mix in society, at such a moment, and fully intending to return immediately to London, if he should fail in obtaining the desired



London,—a strong detacl
United Service, and no ir
of the Oriental, being at
in the extermination of
by the various means s
the *désœuvré* in the F
therefore got through
between his arrival at tl
the return of Monsieur H
patience, going the usu
cafés, *restaurans*, and *sa*
some one or other of hi
omitting his daily enqu
la Paix; until at length,
tress, on whom devolv

and the former had gone through the fraternal duties which formed the object of his journey, in the most edifying and exemplary manner. The seasonable relief which at so great a personal sacrifice, he brought to his hopeful *cadet*, was not supplied without the accompaniment of a certain *quantum* of objurgation; which salutary discipline, however, was of course much more sparingly administered, than it would have been, if the example of the censor himself could have been appealed to by the culprit, in extenuation of his delinquency; as in all such cases the moralist is obliged to make up in harshness, for what he wants in authority.

The penitent Spencer submitted with great resignation and humility, to Harry's well-merited animadversions on his folly, as the price of his extrication from the difficulties which it had entailed upon him. He was, as might be expected, most vehement in his expressions of regret for what had happened,



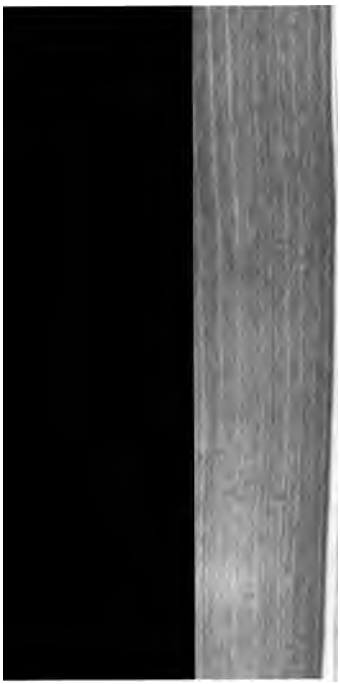
as for the singularity
kept his word.

With respect to th
which the money had
found that it was qu
in question the integ
There was in fact,
suspicion of foul pla
been *improvisé* after th
kyns's hotel, and Spen
rably well known to
mark for sharpers. T
rality of engaging a
circumstanced, in suc
consideration of a di
however it might infl

world, for any aspersion on their honour as gentlemen.

The money was therefore paid, without hesitation or demur; and Harry contented himself with strongly recommending his brother to keep clear of all *impromptu* suppers after the opera, in which Mr. Tomkyns and Lord St. Kitts might be inclined to display their dangerous hospitality; earnestly enjoining upon him at the same time, the study of Cocker's Arithmetic, as likely to preserve him from falling into such egregious miscalculations of his means, as that by which he had lately been a sufferer.

This affair having been settled to the satisfaction of all parties, except our hero,—who could so ill afford the money which he had been obliged to disburse, Lumley had no difficulty in persuading him to remain for a week or ten days in Paris, and enjoy the short relaxation from the labours of the



Happening one nig
Variétés, the first pe
entering the box, was
had not seen him sinc
conversation. They
pearance of cordiality
colonel's with much
Harry apparently ab
tary duties, and, co
London. Between
there existed that sc
ance so common whe
brought into juxtapo
social and convivial a
actual introduction h
A rencontre in a for

quaintance into positive intimacy, where there is no unfavourable prepossession to be got over on either side. This was decidedly the case in the present instance; and accordingly a very few minutes passed in conversation during the *entr' acte*, did more towards placing them on terms of friendly familiarity, than a six months' course of occasional *commensality* (we must be allowed the coinage) and intermitting salutations could have effected in London.

"Do you make any stay in Paris?" enquired the colonel, of Calverley.

"A few days:" answered Harry; "I shall remain over Tuesday. I suppose I shall meet you at the ball at the Embassy on that night."

"No;" said the colonel, "I have no business at balls, being generally an inactive spectator on these occasions. Besides, I brought no letters, and have not 'shown up' at the Embassy. I came here, with the intention of



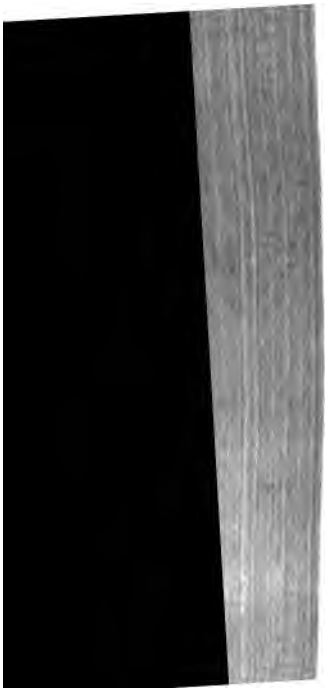
friends whom I
urging me to lea
or whatever may
de l'Ambassade ;
know me from
strong measure
on the strength

"Nay, my dea
are plenty of pe
that could reall
of your friends
this fête, you mu
and what is mor

"You should
do," said Luml

sciousness of perspiring like so many Political Unionists. But on an occasion like the present, the honour of our country is at stake; the display of British *originals* will, I hear, be tremendous—unequalled since the last prize cattle show at Smithfield. It becomes, therefore, the bounden duty of every *presentable* Englishman to rally round the representative of his sovereign, and, as far as in him lies, prevent the *physical* character of the British nation from being estimated according to the unfortunate specimens with which it is the hard lot of his excellency to be afflicted, in greater or less numbers, on certain nights in the year, when his national hospitality is forced to take a very extensive range."

"I fear," said Vesey, smiling, "that I should run some danger of being included in your category of quizzes. With my saffron visage and antediluvian style of neckcloth, I should make but a sorry representative of your republic of fashion."



aims at despotism, I rat
all good Tories, I am a
monarchy and rational
little in common with
tyranny in question. S
dictates, and fear of i
moi, strong characteri
every rank of life. Yo
injustice to class me
pecus."

"Far from it, I ass
"Your claims, I am a
order. I perfectly agre
Dandyism was made fo
a gentleman, *par la g*
beyond what kings can

is no bar to his nobility, or stain on his lineage."

"There is no telling what it might have been in the age of chivalry, which was not the age of *credit*, certainly," said Lumley. "But in our day, judging from usual practice, I should say, that paying the unconscionable demands of those interesting functionaries, was considered the most derogatory proceeding of the two."

Calverley did not part with the colonel that night, until he had obtained his address, and arranged some lionizing expedition for the three, on the ensuing day. Our hero was on every account anxious to be civil to Vesey;—and it was no doubt owing to his representation of the colonel's character and station, in the proper quarter, that in the course of the next four-and-twenty hours, a card was delivered at his hotel, inviting him to the fête at the embassy. Vesey was not quite aware to whom he was indebted for this polite atten-



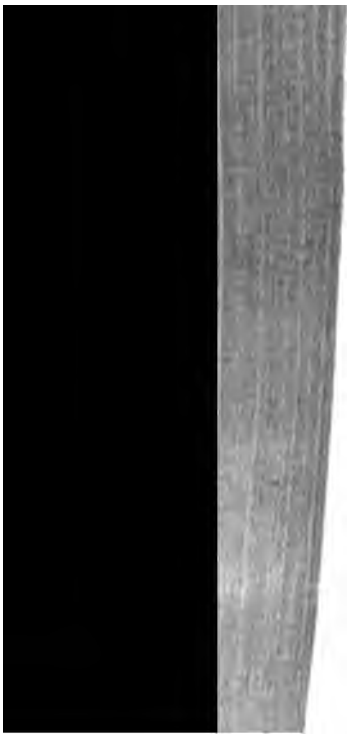
cuming to join their
Monsieur Hérault's ret
certain, according to th
porter's lodge, he wou
suspense for a few days
circumstances, he was
himself of such resou
chance might throw in

Like most of his co
rank in society, Vesey,
was an agreeable com
his long residence in th
taste to draw but sp
reminiscences, in conv
conscious of his ability
share to the general

in all the political importance of their first session, could be less unreasonably addicted to parliamentary *talk*;—and as to Lumley, he had too long survived his parade and guard-room predilections, to be very partial to the discussion of professional matters connected with his majesty's household troops.

With these negative recommendations, in addition to the positive social powers, possessed by each, they were mutually well pleased with one another; and Harry, being particularly anxious to cultivate the acquaintance of a person whom he strongly suspected to be Lady Belvedere's father, and who at any rate, was evidently an influential connexion, seconded so well the social disposition of the colonel towards Lumley and himself, that the trio generally found themselves together during a great part of the day.

But Vesey's patience was at length to be rewarded. Monsieur Hérault returned to Paris, and in answer to a note from the



...ed for the inte...
requested. Vesey ...
ment; and on giving ...
was immediately u...
where Monsieur H...
visit with an anxiet...
own,—the artist's cur...
excited by what he ...
guished stranger's p...
to see him.

Monsieur Hérault ...
talkative little man, ...
with twinkling grey ey...
character, peering fron...
eye-brows that might ...
especially when compa...
his head,—which was ...

wise well shaved; and instead of brocaded dressing-gown, Persian slippers, *bonnet Grec*, &c. his costume exhibited nothing remarkable, except a scrupulous degree of neatness, savouring somewhat of *Carlism*, and the *absence* of the little red ribbon of the Legion of Honour, which he had hitherto escaped by a miracle!

He received the colonel with every demonstration of courtesy; but the latter, on his entrance into the room, drew back in some surprise and vexation, when he perceived an "elegantly dressed female" in possession of "the chair." He begged to remind Monsieur Hérault, that the object of this visit was confidential, but the artist at once pledged himself for the discretion of his fair friend—it was only his lay-figure!

Having gone through the necessary preliminaries of apology and explanation, Vesey now produced the miniature, and begged to know whether Monsieur Hérault recognised in it one of his own works.



a long time ago—up
I was then comparati
my manner was unform
—as you may percei
execution which it ev
the productions of m
vanced period.—Ah,
perfectly—and a sing
a great deal of cha
the likeness is certa
I think every one will
become of Monsieur
have quite forgotten h

"Is it possible,"
tone of the deepest di
recollect nothing of

But, you will forgive me for saying so—it is *so* difficult to recollect your English names."

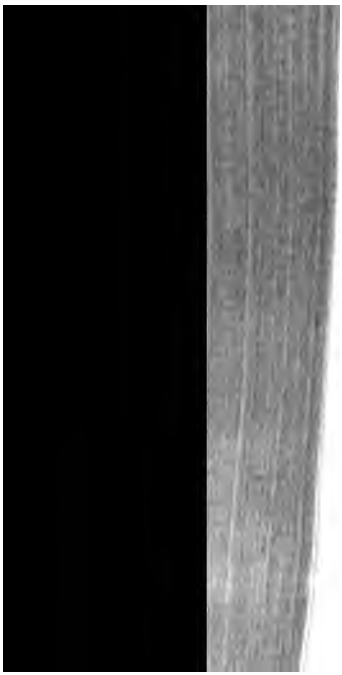
"It *was* an English name, then!—you are sure of that?"—said the colonel, eagerly.

"Undoubtedly English. He spoke French remarkably well, though;—almost as well as *monsieur*;" added he, with an obliging smile.

Vesey was little disposed to heed the compliment, whether deserved or not. Every observation of Hérault's, digressing from the main point, was exasperating to his feelings, as a prolongation of his torturing suspense.

"Was the picture painted in England?" enquired he, as calmly as his impatience would allow.

"Not exactly in England; *mais bien dans les états de sa majesté Britannique.* The fact is, I have been very little in England, properly so called,—merely passing through it *à la hâte*;—a circumstance which I very much regret; as no man, I assure you, surpasses me in respect for your great and



mind with a crowd
to my heart."

Poor Vesey could
But he was obliged t
flattered, &c."

"*Where* did you s
resumed he.

"I am almost cert
"although one *may* b
tance of time;—I thin
that it was painted a
I passed several years i
—at a time when my
my *relations* with his M
then Comte d'Artois,

"Well, but," said Vesey, "you say the miniature was painted in Edinburgh?"

"Why, yes! I am almost certain of it;—but you will probably remember if Monsieur ——, his brother, I presume?—No!—well, then, a relation, no doubt—perhaps you will recollect whether he was at Edinburgh in 18—?"

"Monsieur Hérault!" said the colonel, "I regret to say that I am wholly unable to assist your reminiscences. The fact is, my only object in troubling you with this visit, is to obtain from you, as the painter of this miniature, such information as you may possess concerning the original. What *I* know of him, amounts to very little;—but I will acknowledge that it is of the utmost importance to me to ascertain more. You will, therefore, confer on me a lasting obligation, if you will simply state all that you know respecting him;—especially any particulars of his career subsequently to the period at which he sat to you;



"Every thing I kn
very much at your s
"But I fear I shall not
curiosity on all these po
—it is really too stupi
Attendez—that, at least,
cal in two or three minu

So saying, he walked
which stood in a corner
from it a memorandum
sions.

"You see," continued
vantage of regularity in
Here I have, regularly en
notice of every portrait, o
executed by me, since I

cerning my sitters, which, from time to time, I may have judged either curious or important. *Par exemple*, one of my earliest patrons was Monsieur de Chateaubriand, and *comme de raison*, I have, as you will see here, noted down some of the highly interesting particulars of his political life, that have come under my immediate observation, and ——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Vesey, in as placid a tone as he could command, "forgive my impatience. At any other time, I beg to assure you, the biography of Monsieur de Chateaubriand would be a subject of great interest; but, really, just at present, my anxiety about the original of this miniature is so intense, that it supersedes all other considerations. You have led me to hope that the *name* which you were endeavouring to recollect just now, might have found a place in that book."

"Not a doubt of it, sir," said the good-

occasion, omitted the
name. Let me see—
hard frost, was it no
years before—*n'importe*
'Milord Kinloch,'—'L
—'Le Lord Provost,
We must try the nex
We have got him at l
the name is Cl—Clar—
"Clarges again!" ex
much disappointed;—fo
Hérault might have kn
name. "Had you no r
Clarges was a fictitious d
"*Eh, mon Dieu, non!*"
"Well, forgive my cat
way. Wha

woman of his own. In fact it was for her that I painted this miniature, if I recollect aright."

"You say she was handsome! Have you a distinct recollection of her countenance?"

"*Ah, Monsieur le Colonel!*—a true Frenchman never forgets a pretty woman! His memory is imperishable where the *beau sexe* are concerned."

"Does this," resumed the colonel, drawing from his bosom, with a trembling hand, the miniature of his unfortunate sister,—"does this recal her to your recollection?"

"Ha!—*Juste Ciel!* what a likeness! 'Tis herself—and the miniature—it is a perfect *chef-d'œuvre. Cette pauvre Madame* Clarges! *Qu'elle etait jolie!* What has become of her?"

Vesey shuddered. "I am unable," said he, "to give you any information on the subject. But Clarges,—surely you did not lose sight of him immediately after that picture was painted?"



preparatory to the *ac*

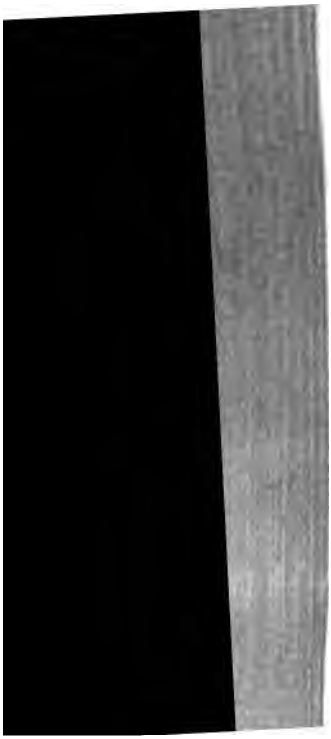
"And since that
nothing concerning h

"Absolutely nothi
him altogether! I h
his name to different
whom I have had th
quainted since; but i
never met with one w

"I am fated to
Vesey, gloomily. "N
you many thanks for y
apologies for troubling
am not at liberty farthe
one more enquiry. D
body at Edinburgh, w
acquainted with the su
Clarges! He must hav

"No doubt—no doubt—but of that I know nothing. I never met him in society. There is however, I think, one person at Edinburgh who may probably know something about him. His banker—I am almost certain he paid me by an order on Mac Alister and Company: yes, certainly it *was* Mac Alister. And now I recollect, Monsieur Mac Alister (who, by the bye, was an intimate acquaintance of mine, *bon enfant d'ailleurs*) came to see the portrait two or three times during its progress.—Yes, I think it highly probable that you might obtain some information from Mr. Archibald Mac Alister."

This was but a forlorn hope, but poor Vesey caught at it with eagerness; and finding that there were no more accurate particulars to be elicited from the obliging Monsieur Hérault, he politely took his leave of that gentleman, by whom he was conducted with every mark of attention to the limits of his territory. Vesey, however, had scarcely



and the little man,
exertion of running
dressed him.

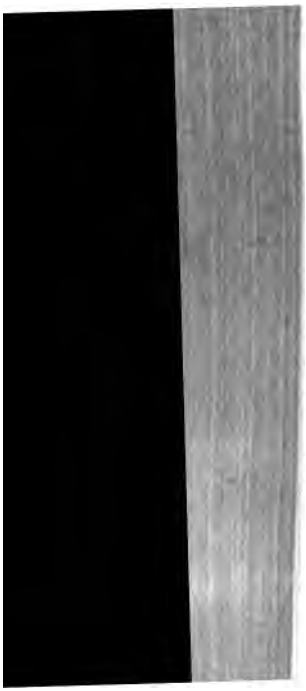
"I have a thousa
Monsieur le Colonel.
but I had entirely fo
Mac Alister and Con
ten years ago. I am a
be vain in that quarter

"Well, but," said
Mr. Archibald Mac A
at Edinburgh."

"Why no! I rather
"for it has just occu
not long ago of his
America."

CHAPTER XI.

Vesey's disappointment and vexation at the unsatisfactory result of his visit to Mr. Hérault, can hardly be described. Never had the clue by which he might unravel the sad mystery of his sister's fate appeared so nearly within his grasp;—never had the bright gleam of hope sunk more suddenly into absolute darkness. He returned to his hotel in a state of deep dejection, quite despairing of ultimate success, and half inclined to relinquish, at once and for ever, the pursuit of a shadow. "Why," thought he, "seek any farther to penetrate a



beyond the reach of
that retribution has falle
my agency. Would th
been the instrument of
haps, the gratification
been dearly purchased
shame and dishonour!"

It was the day fixe
British Ambassador's;
had agreed to dine with
the three were afterwar
to the Embassy. Our
able to fulfil the forme
ment, having in the mo
by a command to join t

ber of the British parliament. A royal invitation of course supersedes every other, and Harry was therefore obliged to charge Lumley with his excuses to the colonel.

The engrossing interest of his interview with Mr. Hérault, had so completely abstracted Vesey from the ordinary concerns of life, that he had completely lost sight of his evening arrangements, and he was only aroused from a painful and protracted reverie, in which he had fallen on his return from the *Rue de la Paix*.

"Sinking from thought to thought—a vast profound,"

indulging in much fruitless conjecture and uncomfortable speculation,—by the announcement of Captain Lumley, who arrived with military punctuality, at the appointed dinner-hour.

Vesey then recollected that he was still in his morning-dress, and that it was necessary for him to make his toilet before dinner. He

calculation of time, al
most plausible excuse
dition, and having rec
himself for a few min
that lay in graceful c
he hurried to his dres

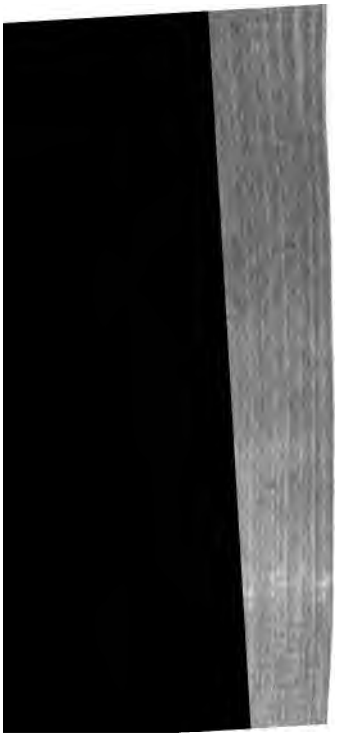
A few minutes suf
operation of *adonizing*
effort to cast from him
cares, and smooth his
placidity, if not of ch
breeding imperiously e
society, however violen
be the storm which ra
the *necessity* for exerti
the feelings, is a positi
occasions. The strug
less irksome as you adv

heroism, by the temporary alleviation of your distress, which the bustle and animation of the gay world is so well calculated to produce. You have striven to appear tranquil, if not happy;—and for a short time, at least, you may perhaps succeed in being what you seem.

On re-entering the room where he had left Lumley, Vesey was startled to find him with the mysterious miniature in his hand, and examining it very attentively; he then perceived that he had in his hurry forgotten to conceal it when Lumley was announced. He had flung it angrily on the table on his return from the visit to Mr. Hérault, and there it had remained.

"This is a very clever miniature," said Lumley, as Vesey approached the table. "May I take the liberty of asking whose portrait it is?"

"Oh that!" answered the colonel, in evident agitation and embarrassment; "that is



ceiving at once that h
question, "it is a v
and I was induced to
the striking likeness
mine."

"Likeness!——to
exclaimed Vesey, wit

* *
* *

The dinner party
passed off like most
and Calverley had
now began to throng
bassy. Neither Lun
ever arrived; but t
acquaintances whom

susceptible lady; and although their expressions of gratification at meeting him again bore every appearance of cordiality, we, who are *tant soit peu* behind the curtain, may perhaps, without being considered uncharitable, question the sincerity of these demonstrations on the part of the gallant colonel. As to Mrs. Aylmer, the blush that rose to her cheek on Calverley's approach, was too eloquent and intelligible, to need the interpretation of the tongue, had she been less candid in the avowal of her feelings. Harry was no coxcomb, but he was in full possession of his organs of vision, and these slight evidences of a tender interest in his welfare were not lost upon his understanding, although they were powerless against his heart. He therefore bestowed only such attentions on the fair lady, as were *de rigueur* from a polite but casual acquaintance, and this contributed not a little to the equanimity of the worthy colonel, which would have been grievously disturbed

wife. We fear that
ficient in that spi
derives mirth from
pressed agonies of a
and indulgent,—on
sufficiently alive to m
affording him a reas
savage. But the con
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however speculative
practical developmen
usually inclines us to n
with those who have
cares and encountere
marital character. Th
tice is a salutary superst

But it was not from M
Harry met with

faubourg" that shone benignantly on his pretensions, and followed his movements with interest. The fame of his senatorial successes had followed him to Paris, and suffered nothing from the process of evaporation during the journey;—on the contrary, it had, as is usual, greatly expanded in volume, and brightened in hue; and so powerfully did his good looks and *air romantique* second the impression of his talents in the minds of the fair enthusiasts in question, that he was at once raised to the rank of a "European celebrity," and he would himself have been quite bewildered by the effulgence of that reputation that surrounded him as with a halo, had he not been far too modest to notice its reflection in the admiring glances and encouraging smiles by which he was encountered on all sides. His short stay at Paris had already made him "the fashion;" another fortnight, aided by a judiciously selected flirtation, and he would have been "the rage." But of what use are "four by honours"



quietly were allied
was in very safe cus
"Where is Vesey
as the latter made h
"He is not comi
pected intelligence
evening, requires
London. He start
ing."

As Lumley spoke
the grave and thou
countenance,—an as
all times, and especia
and gaiety. A dre
Calverley's mind.

"Ha!" exclaimed
pened, I am sure!

be so energetic, my dear Harry! Lady Belvedere is very well, for aught I know to the contrary—though I will not swear that she may not be connected with the cause of Vesey's departure. I cannot enter into particulars here, but if you wish, we will just walk through the rooms, and make our escape. Depend upon it, you shall know all that I know. I have not much to tell, but such as it is, you shall hear it. As it is rather an odd business, however, we had better postpone its farther discussion until we are alone.



CHAP

"I MUST see your m
Vesey, in a perempto
a house in Grosvenor
the occurrence deta
chapter.

"You can't, sir. I
to admit any visitors ti

"I tell you I *will* se
sternly;—"my busines
portance, and one that

"My name!—no! that is not necessary. Tell him that a person wishes to speak with him, whom he has not seen for years, but whom he will recollect perfectly well."

The servant was irresolute;—he had sufficient knowledge in these matters to be certain that the stranger was a gentleman, and the authoritative tone which he assumed, spoke strongly in favour of his right to admission. But why refuse to tell his name?

"I am very sorry, sir," answered he, after a pause; "but it would be of no use to give that message;—you had better send in your name or your business."

"I will do neither," said Vesey; "state what I desire you—and I will bear you harmless. But stay—perhaps you imagine that I am a beggar or petitioner of some sort. If so, here is what will convince you that you are mistaken (slipping a sovereign into the man's hand), so now, once more tell your master



resisted. The porter
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them, the latter disapp
few moments after, be
" have the goodness te

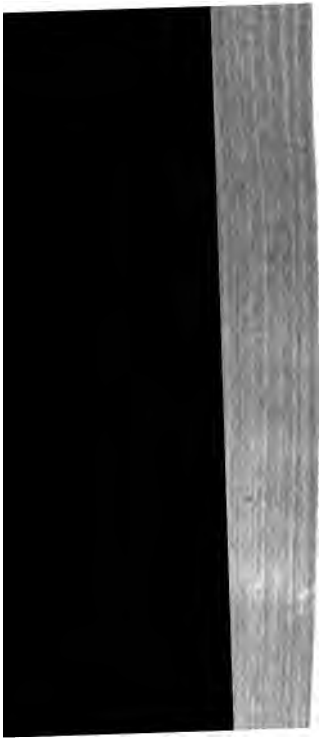
Vesey followed, an
splendid library, where
tinguished appearance
middle period of life, l
altered by time, could
at once as the original
ture.

A slight shudder ran
as his eye fell on that
tenance. He mastered

(we will still call him so for the present), struck by the singularity of the stranger's approach, which seemed studiously calculated to prevent immediate recognition,—"May I request to know to what I am indebted for the honour of this visit?"

Vesey waited until the door had closed after the lingering servant;—and then, striding up to the chair where Clarges sat in momentarily increasing amazement and undefined alarm,—with one hand he laid an iron grasp on his arm,—and suddenly removing his hat with the other,—confronted his enemy with a glance of inexpressible hatred and ferocity. It was like the glare of the tiger about to spring upon his prey.

Time and anxiety had committed great havock on the features and general appearance of Vesey. Clarges did not recognise him; and, for a moment, he thought himself assailed by a maniac. He would have started up to reach the bell, and was about to call out for



and intense hate still
undiminished malignit
"In God's name!"
"who are you,—and
"What!" answered
tone of forced calmne
me?" and suddenly d
the miniature of his si
Clarges, and continue
"Villain!—Do you k
"God of Heaven
starting from his seat
together in uncontrol
face!—Oh God!—can
"Yes—it *is* Vesey—
lost,—the murdered
claim a long arrear of

Clarges covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud.

"Ay!" continued Vesey, with mingled rage and emotion,—"well may you hide that guilty countenance,—well may you shudder to meet the gaze of one whom you have injured beyond all power of redress, as beyond all hope of forgiveness! Look upon this picture—look upon it, I say! Think of what *she* was before *you* crossed her path,—pure, lovely—happy—blessed in the devoted affection of all who knew her—still more blessed in her own guileless innocence of heart,—her own joyous and unclouded spirit!—and you—you who blasted the fair prospect of her youth—you who broke the heart of her widowed mother—you who deserted your wretched victim—and left her to perish in solitude—in misery—in despair! Miscreant! have you vainly hoped that you would escape the chastisement due to your crimes,—the vengeance of a brother for wrongs only to be washed out in blood!



which will judge
shall save you!!"
As he spoke, he
tude of menace,
conscience-stricken
immediate violence
two,—not in fear, h
effort at composure,
of his pale and a
trasting fearfully wi
liberate solemnity of
"Vesey—forbear!
wronged you;—I ha
your reproaches—and
they are as nothing
braidings of my own h
not add to those iniu

scornful laugh—"does your mean and dastardly soul fear that I should inflict summary vengeance upon you! Think you that I would dishonour myself by playing the part of an assassin! No!—for this day, you are safe!—but your respite shall be short. Do not deceive yourself. You shall not escape me! As surely as my cause is just and holy, so surely shall you die by this hand!—but far better than you deserve,—it shall be the death of a gentleman and a soldier,—a death not unworthy of the ancient name which you have for ever sullied,—of the order to which you are an eternal disgrace! We will meet in fair and open combat—but my aim is certain—and in this instance, the vengeance of Heaven will direct it!"

"Vesey, for God's sake!" exclaimed Clarges, "cease this idle and insane railing! Of what avail are insults which no earthly power shall induce me to resent! Nay—threaten, vilify me as you will! I have de-

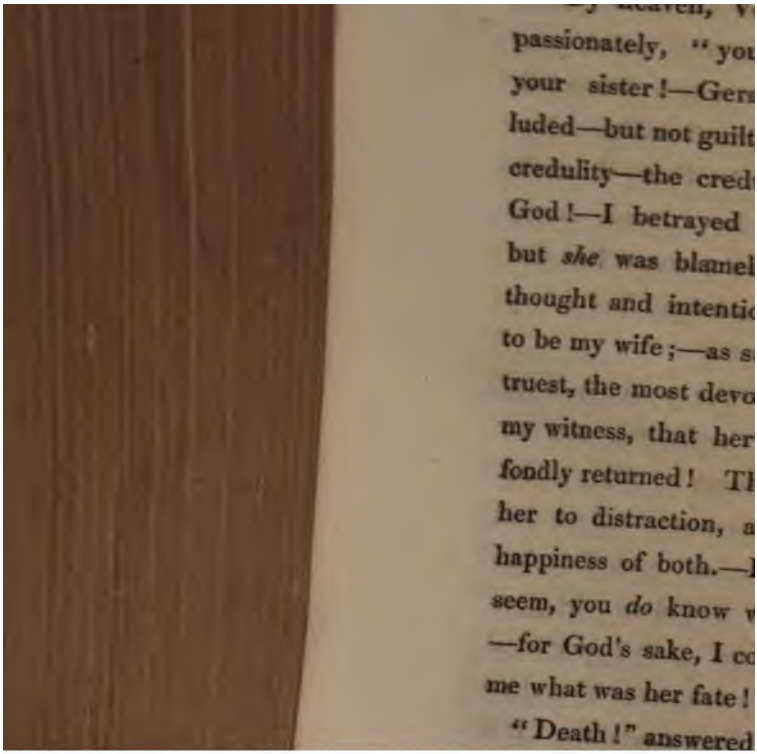


...ged you—on G
not to the extent—
baseness you ascribe to
shall judge me, I loved
I adored—worshipped
than all the world to m
or life—or honour. I
renounced wealth, rank,
—and, wretch that I am
tancy—we might still ha

"Infernal hypocrisy!
"Monster! dare you ad
other crimes, and call
damning falsehoods!—Y
who brought her to a
honoured grave by your
desertion!"

know not whither; and up to this hour I am in total ignorance of her fate! Alas! alas! could I have discovered her retreat—could I have rescued her from the fate which your words seem to indicate, on which she voluntarily rushed—in madness or infatuation—all—all might have been well! Every obstacle was removed!—I could have made ample reparation for my offences towards her and you—I would have acknowledged her as my wife before God and man!"

"Reparation!" cried Vesey indignantly; "miserable man! what reparation can be offered for the loss of honour! What subsequent ceremonial could have removed the foul blot of disgrace, or restored your hopeless victim to the pride of conscious virtue?—Think not to impose upon me by hypocritical professions, or elude my vengeance by a show of unavailing regret for your enormities. It is enough for me to know that your hellish arts triumphed over her innocence and purity—


passionately, "you
your sister!—Ger
luded—but not guilt
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God!—I betrayed
but *she* was blamel
thought and intentic
to be my wife;—as s
truest, the most devo
my witness, that her
fondly returned! Th
her to distraction, a
happiness of both.—
seem, you *do* know
—for God's sake, I co
me what was her fate!
"Death!" answered

familiar face to bend over her pillow. Her helpless infant, left unknown and unprotected, to the compassion of strangers!"

"Ha! my child!" exclaimed Clarges, "does it still live? In pity, tell me—to *her* at least I may make atonement. All I have to bestow shall be her's!—I will acknowledge her before the world—I will——"

"Never!" interrupted Vesey. "She lives, but not for you—she lives, the breathing image of her unhappy mother;—she lives, in honour, in prosperity, and affluence! Like her mother she is beautiful in person, and angelic in disposition. She is all that the heart of a parent can desire, or the soul of a lover imagine. But *you* shall never know her. You shall die without gazing on her beauty, or hearing the sound of her voice. She shall be taught to loathe your memory, and your name shall only be told to her, that she may learn to curse it!"

"Vesey—Vesey," exclaimed Clarges, "this



means of expiation
my offence! I am
may have been you
justified either before
asunder the parent a

"And is it *he* wh
mother of her only
desolate, till grief and
miserable existence—
peal to such sacred ri
hallowed names? Aw
blasphemy!—for five-a
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shall I *now* be cheated
by heaven!—I shall ol
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render imperative. I
time to the torment of

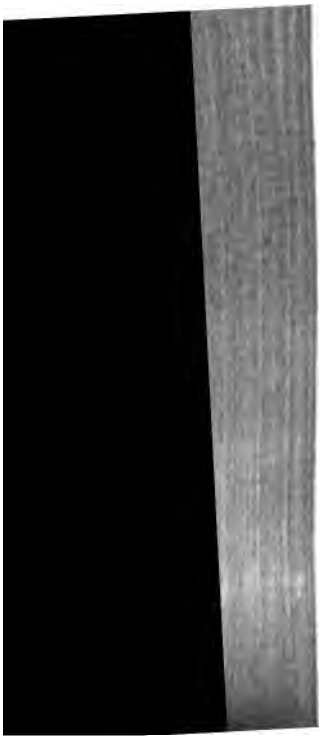
hour passes over;—to-morrow we meet—and as there is a God above, one or both shall fall!"

Vesey was about to leave the room, but Clarges called him back.

"Stay, Vesey!" exclaimed he; "do not deceive yourself—I fear you not—that man lives not whom I fear to meet, if my honour or my duty should require it. But against you—the brother of my lost Geraldine—no power on earth shall induce me to raise my hand. Taunt me, libel me as you will, this is my answer—my unalterable determination."

"Shame on this base and unmanly subterfuge!" exclaimed Vesey, "but it shall not avail you! You *shall* meet me, by all that's sacred! —Liar and coward!—Will you still refuse my challenge?"

"Away!" said Clarges, "tempt me no farther, Vesey—my mind is made up. Say what you will, I heed it not!"



So saying, he darte
rang it repeatedly with
"Madman!" exclai
would you do?—depart
"You shall soon k
Vesey sternly, and as
alarmed by the violer
appearance, with eager
continued, in a loud and
"I again repeat—wl
fore the whole world—t
villain, a liar, and a cow
my scorn upon you!"
words, he walked up to
empty glove hit him slig
Clarges staggered ba
and stood for a second

rage, betrayed the fearful conflict of his soul. At length he sprang forward, with upraised arm, as if to return the blow; but suddenly stopping, and exclaiming, "Oh, God!" he reeled round, and fell across the arm of the chair that stood near him, while the blood spouted from his lips and nostrils.—He had ruptured a blood vessel!

One of the servants now rushed to the assistance of his unfortunate master, while the other, darting upon Vesey, seized him by the collar, and called loudly for assistance. Vesey shook him off, as if he had been a child; and hurling him from him with violence, sent him staggering to the other side of the room.

While these occurrences were taking place with a rapidity which narration cannot emulate, the sound of a carriage, driven hastily up to the door, was heard, followed by a loud knocking. Presently, a hurried step crossed the hall,—and in one moment, Harry Calverley stood before them!



the ghastly and blood-s
stretched almost insensi
servant who supported h

" Good God ! my unc

" What—what has hap
he beheld the tall, upri
standing with folded arm
on the apparently dying

" Colonel Vesey !" co
" what is the meaning
rage has been committe
claimed he, as Vesey's su
his worst suspicions ; "
answer for this !" and rus
assistance of his uncle, h
lifeless form from the floo
sunk, and bore him to a so

" Let a surgeon be proc

door!—Colonel Vesey, by Heaven! you stir not hence, until this is explained!"

"*I* stir not hence! young man!—repeated Vesey, in a tone of disdain;—who shall hinder me?—He who would attempt it, does it at his peril!"—

"I!—I will!" exclaimed Harry, darting towards him, and intercepting his passage to the door. "There has been savage violence,—if not murder, perpetrated here. This blood must be accounted for; and until I learn the truth, I will resist your departure,—by force if necessary."

"No—no!" faintly articulated Lord Calverley;—(for it was he)—raising himself on his arm, and speaking with an almost convulsive effort. "Harry—I charge you!—in God's name—molest him not!—Let him depart in peace, I say! and may God forgive him, as I do!—Harry—I entreat—I command!—as you value my regard!—lay not a finger on him!"



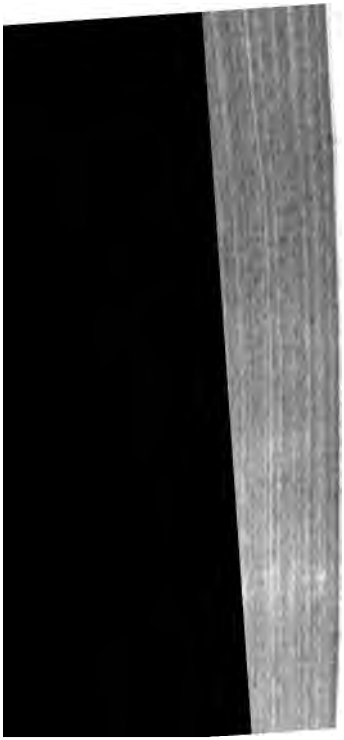
he sank back inse
bewildered — confo
course to pursue.

"Calverley," sa
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continued he, fling
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required, you will
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As he spoke, h
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CHAPTER XIII.

FORE we proceed with the regular course our narrative, it may perhaps be as well to tail in as few words as possible, the circumnces under which Lord Calverley, now ntified with the mysterious Clarges, had st sought the acquaintance of the unfornate Geraldine, and by too successfully purng a well-organized plan of fraud and deption, led her into that labyrinth of misery d despair, from whence she was only rescued death. In thus supplying the deficiencies avoidable in the statements of Colonel Vesey



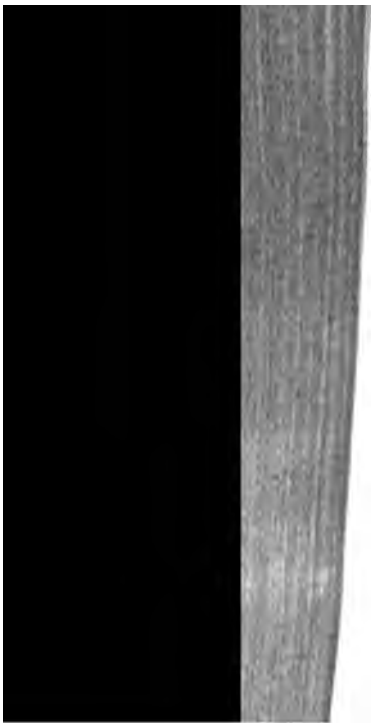
explain the conduct
which it will be seen
cious, than the facts
lead us to suppose.

Sir Hugh Calverl
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able personal attrac
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ill-assorted union could scarcely have been devised, or one more likely to terminate in the unhappiness of both parties.

The result was in strict accordance with the inauspicious character of the affair in its commencement. Calverley, restored to pecuniary independence, and placed, as it appeared to him, irretrievably without the pale of domestic felicity, took as little pains to conciliate the affection of his wife, as to conceal his own glaring irregularities of conduct.

The fatal authority of his own example, was not without its weight on the mind of an injured and slighted woman, deficient in the strong principles of virtue and religion, which could alone have supported her in so trying a situation. Though careless of his regard, she was piqued by his neglect; too proud to reproach, she sought to alarm him; and heeded not the risk she ran in compromising her own reputation, could she but have hoped to excite his jealousy. But in this she was disap-



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in her path, and
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revenge, Lady Ca

When his disg
Sir Hugh could
He took the usu
his honour, and
here his own sins
retributive justice.
means of retaliatio
pence damages agai
siastical court refus
nulling sentence, and

position aggravated by the feeling of self-reproach!—how sincerely did he now lament that he should have sacrificed the happiness of his whole life, for the sake of immediate extrication from pecuniary difficulties, when a few years of economy and merely comparative self-denial, might have freed him as effectually from his embarrassments, without entailing on him the awful penalty which he was now forced to pay for youthful follies;—follies, the memory of which now faded into insignificance, when contrasted with the deeper criminality of his married career, marked as it was by the shameless violation of a sacred engagement, and the habitual disregard of its duties. Nor was he quite insensible to the awful responsibility which he had incurred, with respect to his wretched wife, whose guilt and ruin were too plainly traceable to his heartless neglect and pernicious example. But what availed this tardy repentance? His doom was sealed! He had forfeited not only



mind;—dishonour, he
and misfortune, unche

The same authorit
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him to contribute larg
tenance of his wife, c
station which she had
forfeited. The death
had left him in poss
and gladly indeed wo
two-thirds of his inco
his now, alas! inexti
gagements. But alth
the death of his erring
to liberty, he was exen
which her residence i
himself might have ac

marriage, in case of a divorce from her husband, she had sought the protection, and thrown herself on the mercy of her father, General ——; and on his appointment to a high military command in the East, she had gladly accompanied him to regions where her disgrace might be less generally known, than in England, or where, at least, society might, if it thought proper, affect ignorance or incredulity on the subject.

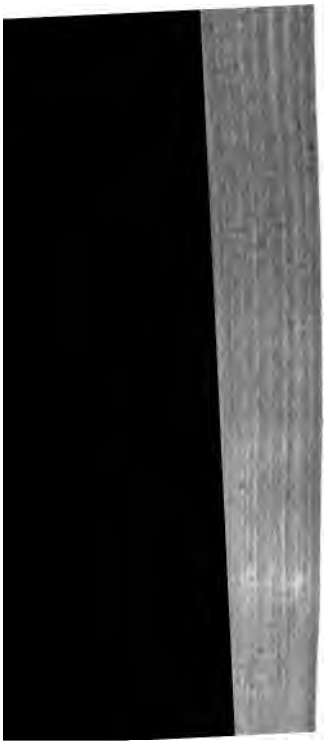
In the meantime, Sir Hugh plunged afresh into the vortex of dissipation, and strove, by dint of excitement, to make up for the want of happiness. But to one who had early drained the cup of worldly pleasure, and gone the round of frivolous amusements, weariness and disgust were the inevitable result. Formed by nature for worthier pursuits, and capable of nobler exertions, he often sighed for some object in existence which might rouse and sustain the latent energies he was conscious of possessing.

cient in feeling or
errors which had fi
of an austere and
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claimed him;—but h
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ments of his son; an
alliance repugnant t
baronet had made him
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rally ensued.

. Like all men of c

that *beau idéal* of perfection in the fair sex, to which the young and enthusiastic are apt to refer the object of their homage, even when that homage is but slight and transitory;—how much more when the destiny of a life is to be linked with that of the being whose personal and mental qualifications are to undergo the comparison! Now, although, of course, it would be absurd to require *perfection* in any of the daughters of Eve,—there are individuals of the sex, and those not a few, who approach sufficiently near to the ideal standard of the most *exigeant* sentimentalist, to ensure his happiness in the wedded state. But, alas! this rare accordance is not to be looked for in connexions unsanctioned by morality, and condemned by religion. The mind may have been originally pure,—the heart guileless and disinterested;—but the charm and dignity of the female character can ill dispense with the *prestige* of virtue;—the gentle spirit of woman must either droop at

connexion to the Vice-Royalty of Ireland, having induced him to visit Dublin, he had accompanied their Excellencies to the theatre, on the occasion referred to in Vesey's narrative. From the moment his eye fell upon the countenance of the lovely Geraldine, who, it will be recollected, sate in the next box,—he recognised in her the original of a miniature which had excited his admiration a few days before, in the *atelier* of C——. That angelic face, so faithfully recorded by the pencil of the artist, had appeared to him too perfect in its loveliness, to be aught but an ideal creation of the painter's mind;—and now that he beheld it with every charm enhanced by the captivating play of the features in conversation,—the unconscious, and therefore more bewitching variety of expression which her youthful interest in the performance produced,—he was wholly subdued;—and in acknowledging the realization of his



...ssing bordering on

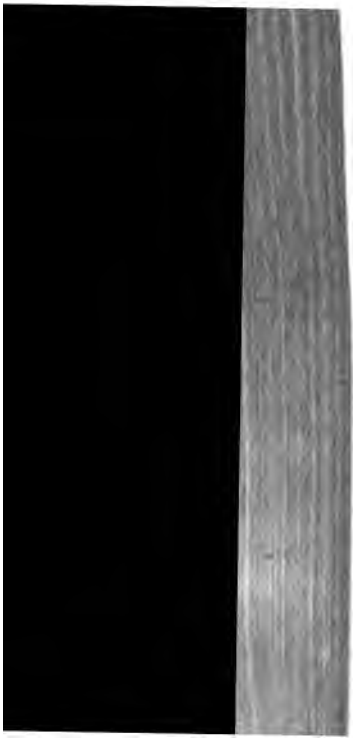
For the first time i
had seen one whom
with a pure and dev
whose sweetness of di
look,—while her eye
intelligence and mode
can counterfeit, and no
It was a countenance l
the impress of the a
could have worshipped
availed the sight of su
one whose purest affec
whose heart was outlav

In spite of all that
honour dictate, from
soul was engrossed by

known to her;—with what view, he dared scarcely whisper to himself!

From C—— the painter, and other quarters, he gradually, and without committing himself, ascertained all the necessary particulars concerning her family, and the place of her residence;—but it was some time before the dark project, suggested by his unhallowed passion, was sufficiently matured to allow of his acting on information cautiously and surreptitiously obtained. In one instance, however, his prudence deserted him; and he contrived secretly to procure from a talented but unprincipled pupil of C——'s, an accurate copy of the miniature which that artist had painted for Miss Vesey's brother.

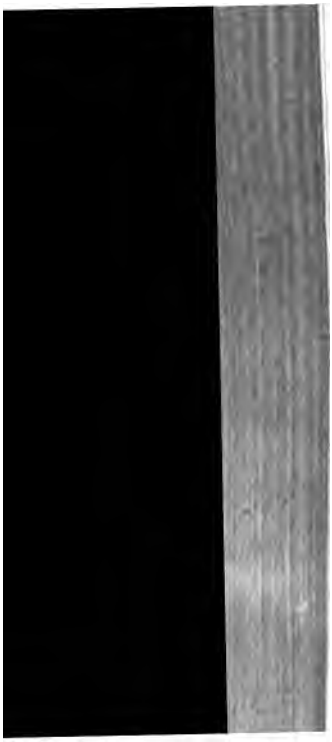
We have not space,—nor if we had, would it be an agreeable task—to follow the train of his machinations. With the sad result the reader is already, at least in part, acquainted. Having, on some pretext or other, dismissed



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elude the suspicion
friends in Dublin, a
he travelled. The
to secure an introdu
Vesey have been st
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punction. Geraldin
not exist without h
not have had her le
ing. But he could
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opinions of the wor
alternative: — could

give up country—kindred—name—everything,—if she would only consent to accompany him to America, or some equally distant region, where he might live for her alone, where she should never be made acquainted with the existence of that guilty and aggrieved being, his connexion with whom seemed to present the sole, but fatal, obstacle to the accomplishment of his dearest wishes.

If there was much of wickedness, there was also no little difficulty and danger in the execution of this project; but of the latter he was reckless, and when did a great and overwhelming passion pause to calculate the amount of the former requisite for the attainment of its object? His plan of emigration could not be immediately carried into effect, as time and caution would be necessary to realize as much of his available property as would secure the means of comfortable subsistence in his contemplated banishment. He would, therefore, have to avoid the notice of his friends during



under circumstances
destruction to his h
perhaps his life!—
render himself liable
and the stain cast
dine's family could s
in blood.

The departure of
was however fatally
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as well as of the entir
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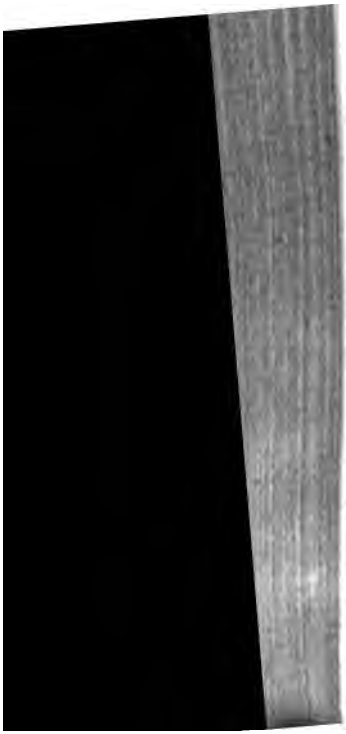
By what arts he c
the repugnance which
to an elopement, it

tion was withdrawn, it was too late. She had yielded her young heart, in all its purity and confiding innocence, to one, whose brilliant qualities and engaging manners were not obscured in her mind by any suspicion derogatory to his moral principles. Guileless herself, she suspected no guile in others; and in consenting to fulfil a pledge given without any conscious violation of duty, and which no apparent misconduct on the part of her lover had obliged her to recal, she felt confident that her beloved mother would soon be reconciled to a marriage which she only opposed out of respect to family punctilio, while her maternal feelings were strongly enlisted in its favour.

Sir Hugh had taken effectual measures to elude pursuit, as well as to ensure the rapid execution of his project of elopement. Amply provided with pecuniary means, he could command the services, and even purchase the

had no difficulty in obtaining possession of
letter, under pretence of forwarding it by
st to Clonrennan. It is scarcely necessary
add that neither the first or any subsequent
tter addressed by Geraldine to her deserted
arent was ever suffered to reach its destination;
Sir Hugh having regularly committed them to
the flames as he received them from the hands
of his unsuspecting victim.

Months rolled on, with as much happiness to both parties as their peculiar position would admit. Geraldine saw nothing in the behaviour of her husband to excite her mistrust, or alarm her with a prospect of diminished affection on his part. His kindness, his devotion to her wishes, were invariable; and could she but have obtained the forgiveness of her mother, whose determined silence constituted her sole cause of anxiety, she would have blessed her lot, as among the fairest which the chances of matrimony afford in this world. Too much accustomed to seclusion, to

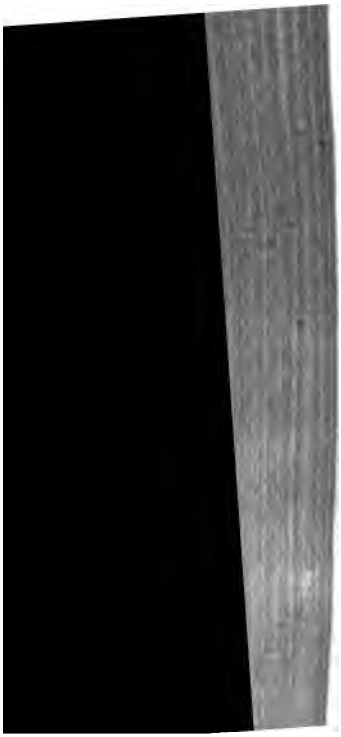


whose amiable quali
afford a stronger ju
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filial disobedience.

Retirement was
perative on Sir Hu
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might have led to
covery. He therefo
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private society; but a
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the name of Héraul
in Edinburgh, and w
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Sir Hugh in any w

twenty years after, led as we have seen, to his detection. But at length Sir Hugh's presence in London became necessary for the arrangement of his pecuniary affairs, as he had put nobody in his confidence, and feared to commit himself by communicating his present address to his man of business, through whom alone he could obtain the requisite supplies, his funds being now nearly exhausted. Geraldine was within two months of the period of her confinement; to leave her was impossible, and he soon came to the conclusion, that secrecy and retirement were to the full as practicable in the vast labyrinth of London, as in smaller places, where the movements of individuals are more likely to be watched by curiosity and commented on by gossip, in proportion as the range of observation is more restricted.

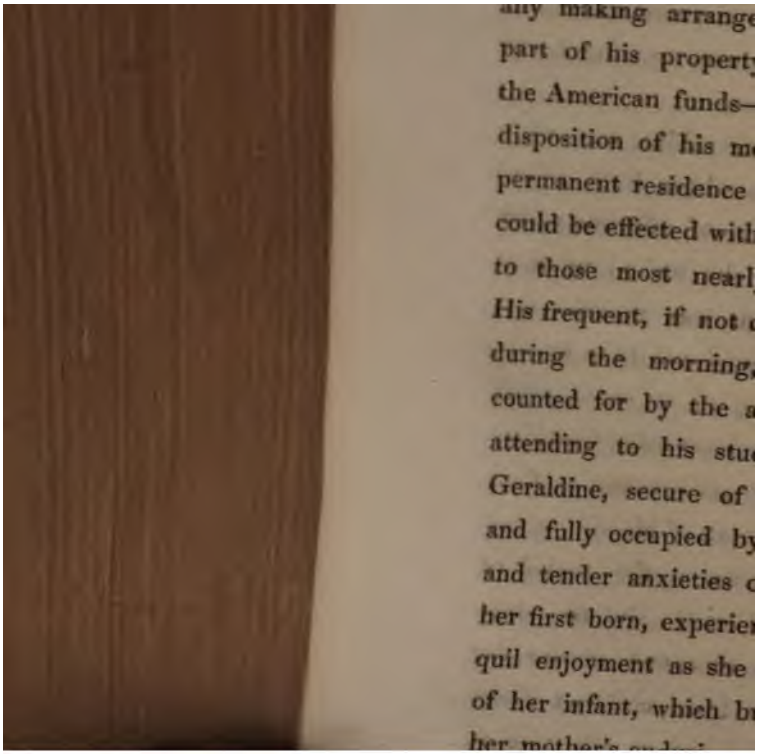
To London they accordingly removed; and having provided a house at Brompton for the reception of his small establishment, he again



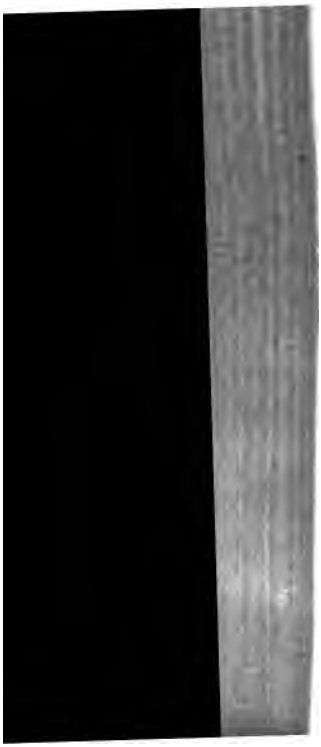
Geraldine) and annoi
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pendents; but there
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the father of our hero
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his own proceedings,

or foe, he was well aware that he should only get the credit of a temporary *liaison*—which in his set, and under his circumstances, was too much a matter of course, to attract any extraordinary share of notice.

In due course of time, Geraldine was safely delivered of a daughter, whose birth added another link to the chain of affection which bound her to him whom she looked upon as her husband.—Sir Hugh was grateful that it was not a son, as he could not help looking forward to the possibility of an event, which would enable him to acknowledge Geraldine as his wife, and give a legal sanction to their union.—This was the death of his wife, whose health had been delicate at the period of her departure for the east. But no subsequent ceremony could of course remove the brand of illegitimacy from children whose birth had preceded it—and in the case of hereditary honours, this illegitimacy too plainly proclaims itself.



But this tranquillity was destined to be of short duration. The blow fell at last; and with the stunning shock that ever accompanies unexpected and unimagined calamity.—Sir Hugh had been called out of town for two or three days, to attend the death-bed of an only sister, who resided with her husband at Oxford, where he was the head of one of the colleges in the University. An express had been sent up to him to the Albany, whither he went daily to receive his letters, &c. The summons was not to be disobeyed, and in real anxiety for the fate of a sister to whom he had at one time been fondly attached, he returned immediately to Brompton, to make preparations for his instant departure for Oxford. To Geraldine he at once communicated the cause of his sudden journey, taking the precaution however to substitute a fictitious for the real name of his sister, and accounting for the silence which he had hitherto maintained respecting her, by stating



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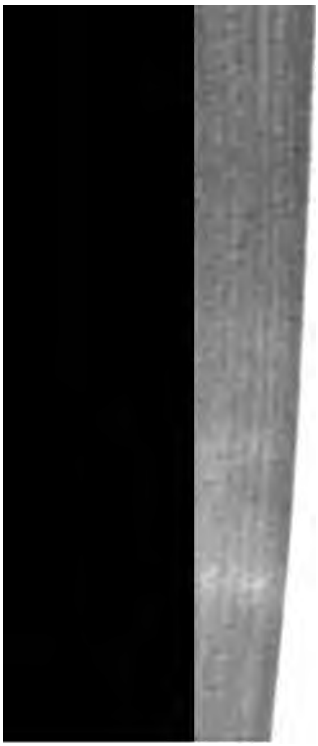
last glimpse of his carriage wheels, her eye was caught by some papers which lay on the carpet close to the door.—These were some letters which Sir Hugh had that morning received at the Albany, and which, contrary to his usual practice of leaving all such documents at his chambers, he had in the hurry and agitation of that morning's intelligence thrust into his pocket, from whence they had fallen unnoticed by him, as he drew out his handkerchief on taking leave of Geraldine.—She stooped almost mechanically to pick them up, without feeling any curiosity as to their contents; but the superscription of the first that met her eye, at once arrested her attention. It bore the Oxford post-mark, and was directed to "Sir Hugh Calverley, Bart., Albany, London." She examined another, and another—they all bore the same address.—She was struck with astonishment and alarm—a dreadful suspicion shot across her mind.—She sank half-bewildered, on a



presence. She was however, sinking rapidly. —After lingering through the following day, she breathed her last on the second morning after his arrival.

When all was over, Sir Hugh took his departure for town, with a sad heart. Being accompanied on his journey by his brother Mr. Calverley, who had been sent for on the same melancholy occasion, he did not, of course, drive directly to Brompton, but proceeded to the Albany. On his alighting from the carriage, a letter edged and sealed with black, which had come by that morning's post, was put into his hand. He opened it eagerly.—It was dated from Madras, and announced the death of his wife!—Yes—he was free!—She had died on her passage out;—nay more, she was dead at the very time when he was plighting his faith to another!

Words cannot do justice to the feelings of rapturous joy with which he received this intelligence. The melancholy scene which he



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now grace and adorn his
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England!

With a heart full of g
tion, he flew, rather than
—But little did he anti

previously. No one knew whither she had fled;—but she had taken her infant with her!—

Stunned—almost paralysed by this overwhelming intelligence, Sir Hugh was some time before he could collect his senses sufficiently to make any enquiry concerning the mode and circumstances of her elopement.—But the alarmed and agitated servants could give him no information likely to assist in the discovery of her retreat. All that could be ascertained from them was, that on the day after Sir Hugh's departure, she had appeared unusually dejected;—that she had sent the nurse and the man-servant out of the way, by giving to both some commissions to execute at the other end of the town;—that during their absence, having sent another of the female servants to procure a hackney-coach,—she had got into it, with her child in her arms,—taking with her a small portmanteau,



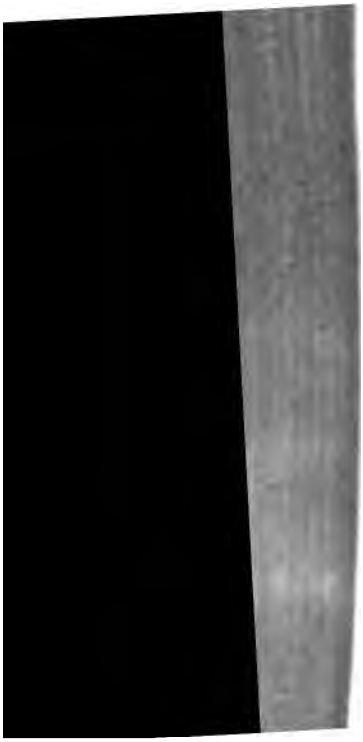
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"The fatal truth has just burst upon me.—I will not reproach you—my despair is too deep for indignation or complaint!—They could scarcely aggravate *your* feelings on receiving this,—and can afford no alleviation to mine. God has punished my disobedience,—and I must submit! I feel I shall not long survive the knowledge of my own infamy—but my poor mother!—my dear Gerald!—how will *they* bear this blow!—Seek not to follow or recal me—we shall meet no more in this world.—Henry—farewell for ever!—God alone knows how I have loved you! May he forgive you, as truly as I do!

G. V."

The grief and anguish with which Sir Hugh read these lines, almost illegible as they were from the agitation of the writer, and the tears which had blotted the page, may well be imagined.—But supported by the idea that

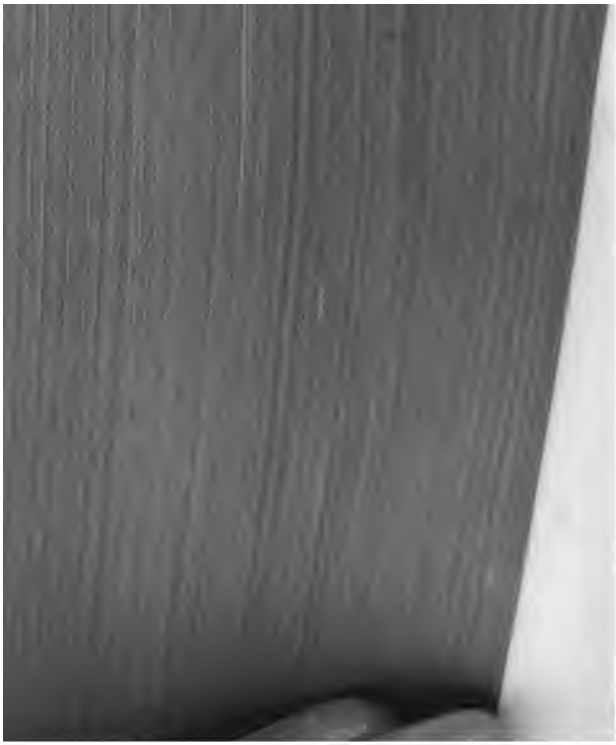


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Time, however,
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tuary, had sobered

world—the selfish, calculating politician. But in his heart, the memory of the lost Geraldine still lived,—a sad—but a cherished remembrance;—and when, nine years after the period of her loss, he had led a fair and titled bride to the altar, he felt the bitter conviction, that man loves not *twice* as *he* had loved, and that, however he might hope for tranquillity in this world, *happiness* had left him for ever!

With respect to the circumstances that had led to his discovery by Vesey,—the reader will scarcely require to be told that Lumley had recognised Lord Calverley's features in the miniature which had fallen accidentally under his notice;—that in the surprise and excitement of the moment, Vesey had said enough to enlighten him as to his feelings towards the original.—The dark threats and denunciations which he had used, and the few facts he had rather betrayed than revealed, induced Lumley to communicate what



CHAPTER XIV.

THE day after the appalling scene which had taken place in Grosvenor Square, Vesey was roused from a fit of moody abstraction, by the entrance of Harry Calverley into his apartment. The traces of recent agitation were visible on his countenance,—his air was grave and almost stern. Vesey motioned him to a chair, without speaking, and for some seconds, not a word was uttered on either side.

At length, the silence was broken by Calverley.



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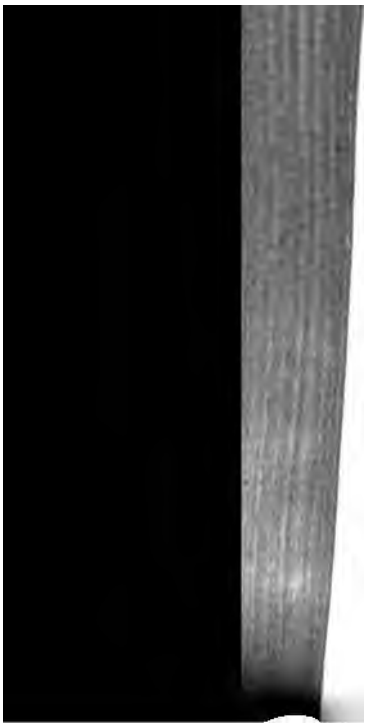
"Well, sir," said Vesey, impatiently; "I will hear what you may have to say,—What does Lord Calverley require of me?"

"An act of common humanity—of justice—nothing more;" answered Calverley. "You are the depositary of a secret which concerns him nearly. The information which you alone have the power to give, may enable him to make some atonement to those he has injured,—and will at any rate afford some comfort to his dying moments."

"Proceed! sir," said Vesey, sternly.

"From you he has learned that his daughter still lives. But he is ignorant of her name and condition; his most anxious wish is to ascertain them,—that he may secure to her all his disposable property,—if there is still time. But he entreats,—he implores you, as you hope for mercy in your last hour,—that he may see his child before he dies!"

"Never!" exclaimed Vesey, with energy. "*She* wants not his gold! and would scorn it.



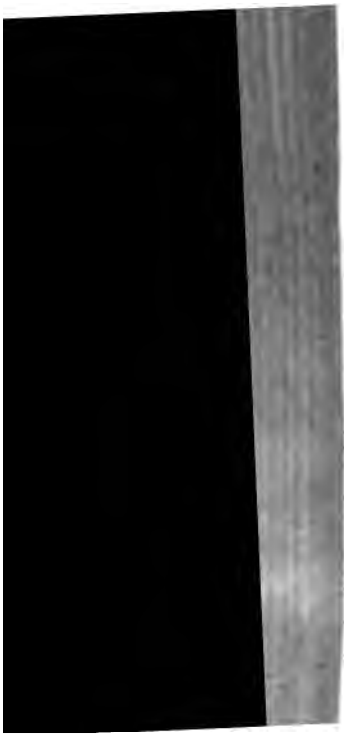
answer to give to
"Good God!"
so lost to all feelin
"Pity!" retorte
"Yes, I feel for hi
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"Colonel Vesey,"
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—you may rest assured I shall do so fearlessly. But if you are inaccessible to reasoning on the subject, here is a document which may perhaps speak more powerfully in favour of Lord Calverley's request, than any argument which I can urge."

As he spoke, he produced a paper which he unfolded and held out for Vesey's examination. It was a certificate of the marriage between Henry Clarges and Geraldine Vesey, dated ——, in Scotland, in the month of ——, 1808, and signed by the officiating clergyman.

Vesey cast his eye rapidly over it;—but his countenance underwent no change from the expression of gloomy inflexibility which it had worn from the commencement of the interview.

"This document," said he, contemptuously, "is only an additional proof of villany, on the part of Lord Calverley. Does he think to propitiate me by displaying the hellish arts,—



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Calverley shudder
said he; "I pity yo
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conveying Lord Cal
tuated more by a ne

ing refusal,—my unfortunate uncle *shall* enjoy the consolation of embracing his child before he dies."

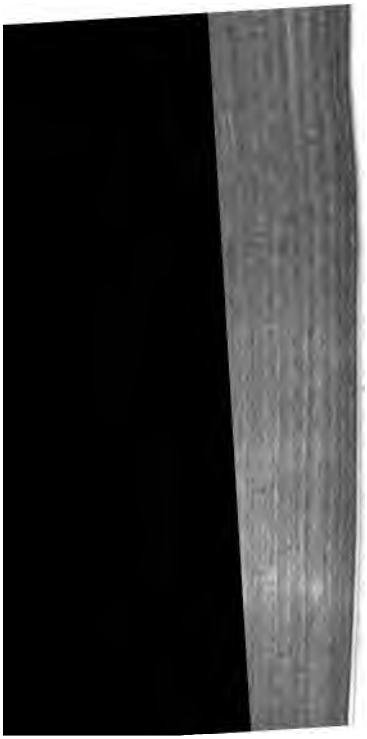
"What can you mean?" enquired Vesey hastily, and in evident surprise.

"I mean, sir," said Calverley, emphatically, "that the mystery which you would fain convert into an engine of torment to be employed against your dying enemy—is no mystery to me,—and shall not long be one to him. I well know *who* is his daughter. To her I will appeal on the instant;—and the appeal will not be made in vain!"

"Ha!" exclaimed Vesey. "Do you presume to brave me! Drop but a hint of the truth to—to her—if you do know her,—and"——

"Well, sir," said Calverley, haughtily, "who shall prevent me from acting in this affair according to my judgment and discretion?"

"Mark me—young man," said Vesey, "you do it at your peril!"



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Lady Belvedere!"

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called him back.

"Stay," said he,
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Calverley. You may now return to him, and say, that he shall see his daughter."

"May I rely upon you, sir?" said Harry, solemnly.

"My *word* is pledged," answered the colonel, "and no man has ever yet presumed to doubt it."

"It is well, sir," said Calverley. "Within the hour I shall expect to see Lady Belvedere in Grosvenor Square."

Harry returned immediately to his uncle, whose rapidly declining state rendered every moment's delay of distressing importance.

The short space of four-and-twenty hours, had produced a fearful change in the unfortunate Lord Calverley. The injury which he had sustained from the rupture of a blood vessel was of so serious a nature, that the distinguished physician who had been summoned to his assistance, from the first pronounced his case to be one of extreme danger. The agitation and excitement to which the accident was solely



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It did not appear, however, that her absence was felt by him, as a subject of regret or annoyance. His whole mind seemed engrossed by one idea—to which he constantly recurred, when he had strength to speak, and which produced a fever of excitement highly detrimental in his precarious state—"His daughter —where was she to be found? Could he but see her, before he expired, he should die in peace."

These and similar expressions, uttered at intervals, and with seeming incoherence, during the night, were at first attributed by the physician to the effects of delirium. But Sir —— soon perceived that this mental perturbation was the cause, not the result of the fever under which his patient laboured; and towards morning, he called Harry aside to question him on the subject.

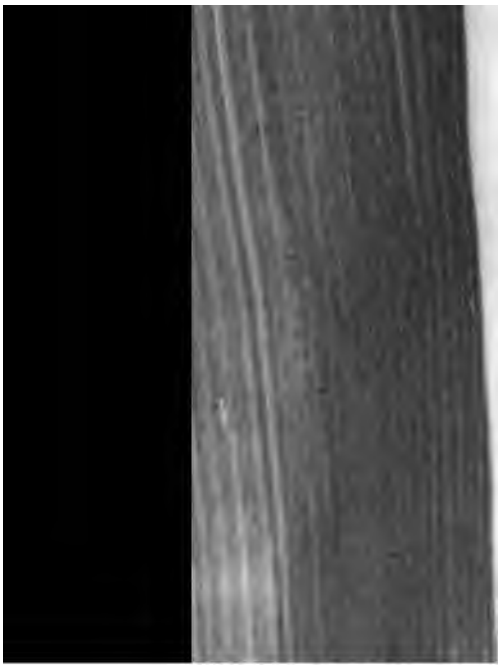
"His lordship's great anxiety to see this person, whoever she may be," said he, "is very evident; and although of course every

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n, which, in spite of all deficiencies in ain of evidence, forced itself on his mind resistless certainty. He did not however, it advisable to communicate his ideas on ubject to Lord Calverley, until he had at endeavoured to obtain through Colonel ey, the information which he alone was posed to possess. Having obtained the cessary instructions from his uncle, who, though reduced to the extremity of bodily eakness, still retained his mental faculties unimpaired, he lost no time in making the appeal to Colonel Vesey, and we have seen the result.

On his return to Grosvenor Square, he found Lord Calverley awaiting his arrival with the most intense anxiety, as the hectic glow of his sunken cheek, and the wildness of his eye plainly indicated, although he had scarcely strength remaining to articulate the question which trembled on his lips.

"Harry!" said he faintly, as our hero re-



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Thus
himself



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daughter will be here
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man. Have you seen
seen my child?" con
audible articulation,
his cheek.
"I *have* seen her,"
have known her long,
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wish;—lovely, amiable
with God's blessing, yo
to enjoy her society and

but—I have not time or strength left—Harry —I have loved you—you are my heir—promise me—" and he laid his hand with a feeble but earnest grasp on that of our hero.

Harry understood him at once, and returning the pressure with warmth, he said—

"My dear uncle, I know what you would say. You may rely on me—your wishes shall be held as sacred as the most solemn engagements. But you will at once understand, that I require not to be urged, where the interests of your daughter are at stake, when I tell you that that daughter is no other than the person of whom we so lately spoke, with reference to *my* feelings of regard for her;—you will probably recollect.

"Who?" enquired Lord Calverley eagerly.

"Your daughter is no other than Lady Belvedere," answered Harry.

Lord Calverley spoke not; but a gleam of indescribable satisfaction, almost amounting to triumph, lighted up his features for a moment;



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dow shutters, recognised the equipage and liveries, he summoned the nurse from the anti-chamber, and hurried down stairs, just in time to receive Lady Belvedere, as supported by Colonel Vesey, she entered the house from her carriage.

Caroline trembled from head to foot, and her agitation almost deprived her of the power of utterance, as Harry advanced to meet her. But amidst the conflict of emotions by which *he* was assailed, hope was greatly predominant, and he was in no danger of drawing any unfavourable inference from her silence or embarrassment.

"You are welcome," said he, as he seized her hand and drew it within his arm; "Colonel Vesey, I thank you," continued he, "you have redeemed your pledge; Lord Calverley still lives, and is impatient to see his daughter." So saying, he led Lady Belvedere up stairs, and Vesey followed them at some distance. He did not, however, accompany them into



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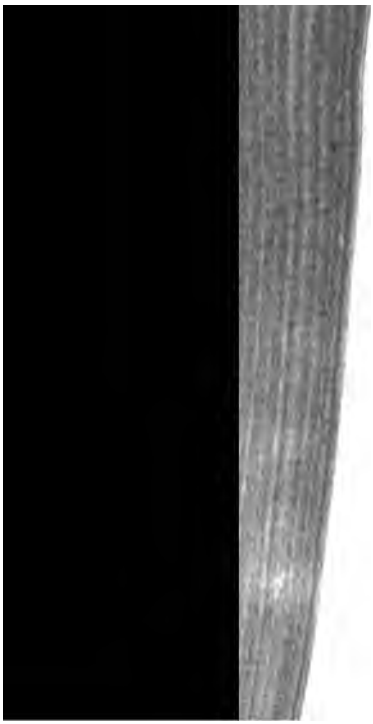
for his eyes were closed, and his breathing was periodically audible, without conveying the impression of suffering. Having dismissed the nurse, Harry approached the bed-side, still accompanied by Lady Belvedere, and, in a gentle voice, pronounced his uncle's name.

Lord Calverley immediately opened his eyes, and looked anxiously around him:—but no sooner did his glance fall on the figure and countenance of Lady Belvedere, than he uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and, with a sort of convulsive effort, raised himself on his elbow.

"Oh God!" said he, "can it be?—It *is*—Geraldine!—Where—where am I?" and covering his face with his hand, he sank back exhausted on the pillow.

"My dear uncle!" said Harry, "this is your daughter—this is Lady Belvedere—Will you not speak to her?"

Again Lord Calverley looked up; and, faintly murmuring the name of Geraldine, ex-



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gradually settled into the fearful rigidity of death!

Harry raised the unnerved and terror-stricken Caroline from her kneeling posture by the bed-side, and bore her fainting into the adjoining apartment; while Vesey, finding that all was over, glided softly into the chamber of death, to view the inanimate form of his enemy.

He stood by the bed-side, and gazed on that haughty and noble countenance, fixed in the stern immobility of the tomb—those manly and intellectual features, from which the "informing spirit" had for ever passed away. He had at length attained the object so long and so ardently pursued. The man who had brought ruin and desolation on his house, lay stretched in death before him; and although his hand had not positively dealt the fatal blow, yet if ever physical effects may be traced to moral causes, he might confidently



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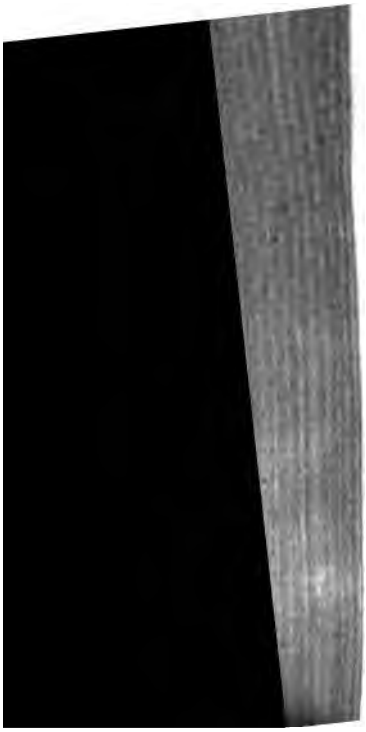
—They had passed away, with the dying breath of the guilty but unfortunate Lord Calverley; remorse and sorrow had usurped their place; and, as he bent in silent awe over his victim, the stern and unforgiving Vesey shuddered at the accomplishment of his long-sought and dearly prized revenge!



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of his fair cousin, with the full confidence of requited affection, and with every sanction which the dying request of his unhappy uncle could add to the accomplishment of his fondest hopes. Nor did Lady Belvedere long withhold from Harry the avowal of an attachment which she had so often tacitly betrayed. The events of a few hours had placed them in relation to each other, in a position which set at naught the formal ceremonial and chilling etiquette of society. They had knelt together by the side of a dying relative—he had joined their hands and pronounced a blessing over them; and although neither had been quite prepared for this last act of Lord Calverley, it will readily be believed, that to their conscientious minds the engagement in question was not the less sacred for being rather sudden.

By Lord Calverley's death, Harry inherited, with the title, a large unincumbered estate, fully adequate to the maintenance of his rank in society, and too considerable to make the



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connubial felicity, than Lord and Lady Calverley; and we think our fair readers will be disposed to agree with us, that, in these degenerate days, a really good husband is not very dearly purchased, by the sacrifice of an embarrassing personal independence, and a step in the peerage.

The discovery of the marriage certificate, and the papers in the possession of the late Lord Calverley at first suggested to Harry the possibility of legally establishing the birth and legitimacy of Caroline, now proved, beyond a doubt, to be his lordship's daughter. But on mature consideration, this project was abandoned, as one of doubtful success;—while its prosecution must inevitably lead to an exposure of many details nearly as painful to the feelings of the survivors, as they would be disgraceful to the memory of the deceased. The question of property which it might involve, being at once settled by the marriage of our hero and heroine, no adequate motive re-

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The Dowager Lady Calverley bore the death of her husband with the becoming resignation of a well-bred widow, entitled to a handsome jointure. She continues to live on the best terms with her nephew, whose wife she views with no more inveterate degree of hostility than is usual between ladies similarly circumstanced.

The news of Caroline's marriage with our hero, proved rather satisfactory than otherwise to Lord Belvedere; as he had given up all idea of marrying her himself, but had scarcely reckoned on so speedy a release from the heavy charge to which his estate was subjected on her account. To do him justice, however, avarice was not to be reckoned among his defects or vices; and in the very courteous letter of congratulation which he addressed to his fair cousin, from Missolonghi, he expressed his determination not to profit, to the fullest extent, by the clause so unhandsomely inserted in her first marriage settlement; but requested that she

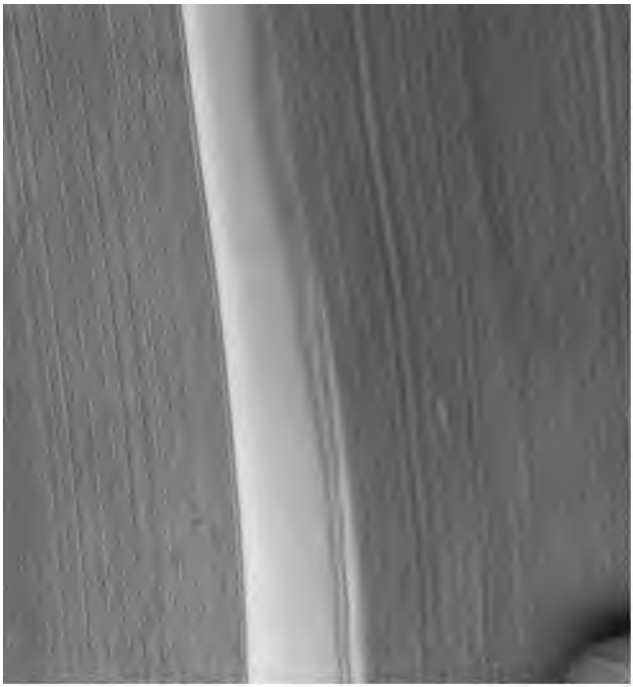


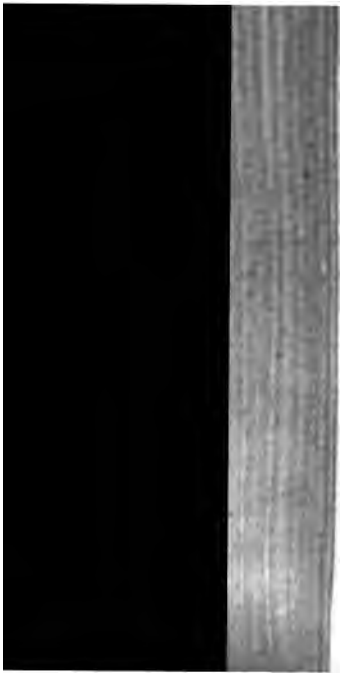
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spirited the Tyringham party, no opposition was offered, and the beardless politician, who had barely attained the age required by law, walked over the course. But Lord Belvedere was too proud to subject himself to the chance of a second rejection, by the rebellious vassals who had already cast off his share of their "divided allegiance;" he was besides too much occupied with the politics of Greece, where, *par air*, he enjoyed local rank as a *liberal*, to attend to the concerns of his own country, which as a Tory, he looked upon as too desperate for amelioration. Spencer has, therefore, been allowed to retain his seat, and the hereditary succession of Calverleys in the representation of this ancient borough, continues still unbroken; a fact which must soothe the spirit of the late lord; if indeed political feeling and family pride can be supposed to last beyond the grave.

We had almost forgotten to mention, what however, the reader would not fail to take for granted, that one of Harry's first acts,





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fascinating viscount return to England a free man, we suspect she has not quite given up all hope of becoming Lady Belvedere;—a project in which it would be unpardonable in us not to wish her success.

According to the most received notions of propriety in such matters, we believe that a respectable hero and heroine ought to retire from the vanity and dissipation of London,—live upon their estates,—kill their own mutton,—encourage the breed of cattle, and the growth of Swedish turnips,—establish Sunday schools, distribute flannel petticoats, and in every thing else set an edifying example to their neighbours. But though we beg to assure the reader that Lord and Lady Calverley are nowise backward in the performance of those duties which their provincial character imposes on them, we are bound to acknowledge, that total seclusion from the gay and busy world of the metropolis, forms no part of their moral or social code. Lord Calverley is too ambitious of honourable dis-



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